



## DOCTOR OF EDUCATION (EDD)

### How the Stakeholders in Two Case Schools in Cyprus Understand Shared Leadership and the Benefits from it

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**HOW THE STAKEHOLDERS IN TWO CASE SCHOOLS IN  
CYPRUS UNDERSTAND SHARED LEADERSHIP AND THE  
BENEFITS FROM IT**

Sahirah Hassouneh Ohlsson

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Education

University of Bath

Department of Education

28/2/2012

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis is concerned with the question of management and leadership with respect to concepts of shared and distributed leadership. The thesis critically discusses these concepts and what appear to be similar notions of leadership, since on the one hand they are difficult to define, while on the other considerable claims have been made as to the benefits of shared leadership. From this discussion key research questions are formulated. A key feature of this study is that it seeks to raise the question of shared leadership with all the stakeholders in a school to see how they understand the concept and what effects, if any, such leadership has in terms of their own practice: this has not been undertaken before in the literature. A further issue addressed is whether, as some papers in the literature suggest, shared leadership is necessary for school performance.

The research was undertaken in two private primary schools in Cyprus, school “A” and school “B”, and explores with teachers, students, parents, Council members (in school “A”) the owner (in school “B”), the head teacher (in school “A”) the deputy head (in school “B”) their understanding of the concept of shared leadership. This was done by asking each stakeholder group about how they perceive his or her role, and the roles of other stakeholders in the school organization and how they perceive the school leadership.

The thesis contributes to the fields of leadership, shared/distributed leadership and stakeholder involvement. Key factors that underpin the concept are highlighted and the constraints on implementing shared leadership in a practical sense discussed.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Many studies have discussed shared leadership in a range of contexts. For example, in business organizations (Pearce and Conger, 2003) where leadership is usually shared amongst those with interests in the business e.g. managers, shareholders, employees, etc. However, the business literature has only a tenuous relationship to education. For a start, those with interests in a business are not similar to stakeholders in schools. Erickson, Flekkoy, Cohen and Hart (1993), suggest that leadership in schools should be shared amongst the stakeholders, who are different to those in business: the governing body/council, head teacher, teachers, parents and students. In education, the term that is often used is that of distributed leadership.

Shared leadership and distributed leadership are closely related concepts. They share the same meaning which is to 'share things out with other people'. There is a rich and critical research literature that discusses distributed leadership. Both concepts entail sharing power and responsibilities among organization's members. Gronn (2002) claims that distributed leadership is a result of dynamic interactions among all individuals where they employ their knowledge and skills in their interactions, and where the result is greater than the sum of the individual actions. It also opens the boundaries of leadership where there are many leaders and not just one leader with all the power. The shared/distributed leadership model emerged, in the literature, as a more suitable type of leadership to apply in modern organizations. It seems to be more effective in responding to the global changes and the pressures on organizations to progress, compared with the traditional model of leadership (Fullan, 2001).

Some studies have shown the benefits of involving some stakeholders in the running of schools (Crozier, 2000; Wolfendale, 1992), whilst others have shown that sharing leadership is constrained by certain factors such as Cyster, Clift and Battle (1997).

There is no doubt that the views of previous authors provide rich and valuable information about stakeholders' role in school organizations that contribute greatly to a better understanding of this topic. For example, Wolfendale's (1992) work centers on

parental/students involvement in school. Her views are the results of her background knowledge and/or case studies that she has carried out in her own context. While much of Crozier's (2000) work, for instance, focuses on issues around social class, 'race,' and gender in relation to children's school experiences and home-school relationships within the UK.

However, it is important to bear in mind that the available studies that investigate stakeholders' involvement focus on certain stakeholder groups such as parents (Wolfendale, 1992), and student involvement (Flutter and Rudduck, 2004). There is no study whose main aim is to investigate the perceptions of each stakeholder group regarding shared leadership. Dingham, Cairney, Craigie and Wilson (1995) state that there is a lack of true, meaningful and representative involvement of stakeholders, in the decision-making processes in schools.

In order to find out how stakeholders understand shared leadership, it is important to explore their' views regarding their roles. Asking stakeholders direct questions about shared leadership would be impractical and time consuming since it is unclear that they would understand the concept in the same way, but asking them about what they do and should do in school will reveal whether there are shared leadership practices in school. It is possible that there are shared practices amongst stakeholders but they do not realize it as shared leadership.

This study took place in Cyprus in 2005. Other research studies carried out in Cyprus have mainly focused on certain individual aspects rather than the whole picture. For example, Menon (2005) examines the views of students regarding the extent of their participation in the management of their university and their satisfaction with the degree of this participation. Also, Kyriakides (2005) discusses parent's involvement in their child's learning and found that increased parental involvement had positive effects on student learning, especially in mathematics, social sciences and the Greek language.

The Cyprus education system is highly centralized (for more see Appendix 1) and the sharing of leadership is a new concept. Since joining the EU in 2004, the demands on the government to abide by the regulations of the European Union in all areas, including education have significantly increased (Peers and Ward, 2004). Accordingly, the pressure on schools throughout the country to perform to an equally high, or greater standard compared with schools in other EU countries has also increased. According to some, the need to shift the education system from centralization to decentralization has become vital (Pashiardis, 2004).

However, to date, studies dealing with school stakeholders and shared leadership have not fully examined how stakeholders in schools understand shared leadership and how they see their individual roles. To my knowledge, they have not shown what views stakeholders might have regarding shared leadership. The literature always seems to paint a positive picture of shared leadership, and portrays it as beneficial for achieving successful organizations. Nonetheless, it is uncertain whether it is beneficial for schools and students.

Previous studies had been carried out in contexts that are different from the Cyprus context, culturally, economically and politically. To illustrate this point, Wolfendale's (1992) study was carried out in the UK. They also do not explore the views of all stakeholders in one single study. In addition, many are based mainly on research conducted in business organizations, which are different from academic organizations (Pearce and Conger, 2003). All these indicate that it is uncertain if the findings from previous studies, which promote the application of shared leadership in these particular environments, can also be applied to school contexts in general and to Cyprus contexts in particular.

Homing in on the Cypriot education system, it is evident that there is a need for studies that investigate how stakeholders in Cypriot schools understand shared leadership and their roles, and how beneficial shared leadership is to Cypriot schools. By questioning stakeholders about their roles it may be possible to unearth their understanding of shared

leadership. This may provide useful suggestions that will help school leaders to plan how to positively involve stakeholders in a way that will promote not only better student learning but also better school functioning.

My interest in this particular topic stems from my initial belief that schools could achieve better outcomes if cooperation was encouraged among the various stakeholders.

This belief was motivated by two factors:

- The first is from my years of experience as a teacher. This has allowed me to uncover how teachers feel about their role in school, what their concerns and expectations are, what their relationship with school leadership is and whether sharing power, making decisions and being accountable for actions or lack of them, is important to them.
- The second is from my experience as a mother of children who are both in school. Being a parent has helped me to better understand parents' concerns, views, and expectations from the school, how they perceive school leadership and how they can become part of the school. As a parent I felt I had the right to know how my children were doing in school and how the school actually worked. I similarly became motivated to be a part of the decision-making processes in the school and to play a significant role in promoting its functions. I too felt capable of contributing to the school and, hence, contributing to the learning of my children. Having a role to play in the school made me feel more confident and reassured about leaving my children there.

### **The Purpose of the Study**

How stakeholders in a school perceive their role and how they perceive the areas that they expect to be involved in as well as how they perceive the advantages and disadvantages of their role, allows us to address how shared leadership is understood in schools.

The two case studies schools in this thesis are referred to as school “A” and school “B” . School “A” consists of two departments: the Primary School Department and the Senior School Department. School “B” consists of three departments: Kindergarten, Primary and High school. The two case studies were carried out in the primary school department in both schools. The two schools have been chosen as good schools to study shared leadership for several reasons:

- They are independent and private; therefore, they are more likely to function as business organizations and are more likely to display business practices such as shared leadership. Here, stakeholders, especially parents, pay for their children to learn and feel that they have the right to be involved and to decide about the school’s issues.
- They are international schools, where parents, students and most teachers come from different backgrounds and nationalities and are more likely to have different experiences and views. This is consistent with the study aim, which is to collect data about their understanding of shared leadership and their role. In a sense international schools provide a test case because it is open to question as to whether different stakeholders with different cultural and educational backgrounds can agree on a view of what constitutes shared leadership. However, they are also primary schools where stakeholders, especially parents, are more involved in the learning of their children compared to higher level schools. So the study has more to contribute to knowledge and practice in private schools since in such schools parents are both customers and stakeholders.
- Both schools aim to maintain high academic standards, school “A” has a Council and is a non-profit organization with low teacher-student ratio, whereas school “B” has an owner and is a profit making organization and runs a special Learning Center for gifted students, students with special needs and students with behavioral problems and has a special program for supporting the parents.

Consequently, we can hypothesize that both schools need the involvement and cooperation of all the stakeholders in order to function properly and achieve their objectives and goals.



Semi-structured interviews were conducted with stakeholder groups in both schools. Data were analyzed in order to establish how each group perceives their current and ideal roles. I also set out to ascertain how each group views the roles of other stakeholders and what advantages and disadvantages each group associate with their own role and how they see school leadership. This enabled a comparison between the individuals in each school, comparison between the groups in each school and comparison between the two schools, in order to ascertain the relationship between schools' cultures and leadership practices. Certain themes that underpin shared leadership were also identified as well as factors that practically limit the application of shared leadership.

### **Research Questions**

The purpose of this research is to find out how stakeholders in two primary schools in Cyprus understand shared leadership and the usefulness of it to their context. This is done by asking stakeholders about how they perceive their role in school organization, the areas they *expect* to be involved in and would *like* to be involved in, what do they perceive as the advantages and disadvantages of their involvement, and how they see school leadership.

Consequently, this study is based upon the following research questions:

1. How is shared leadership conceptualized in schools?
2. What practices comprise shared leadership?
3. In particular, can questions one and two be usefully analysed through the concepts of Power-Control, Delegation, Empowerment, Trust and Communication?
4. In what ways, if any, is shared leadership beneficial for these schools?

The aforementioned questions are based entirely on how people think of them and their opinions regarding the topic. To address these questions, interaction with those concerned was necessary. The above questions focus upon the way the stakeholders perceive their roles in school and their personal understanding of shared/distributed leadership. Thus, it

is essential for this study to ask the stakeholders, and encourage them to share their views.

This thesis starts with an overview and analysis of the literature relating to shared/distributed leadership and stakeholders' involvement, which is drawn from discussions of the shared/distributed leadership role in promoting better organizational functioning and school effectiveness. It will also highlight the theoretical concepts underpinning shared leadership, ending with the clarifications of the research questions.

The literature review chapter discusses the meaning of shared/distributed leadership and the theoretical concepts supporting them: it analyzes the way stakeholders' involvement has been conceptualized.

The methodology chapter discusses how the case study was administered. Semi-structured interviews are utilized, incorporating either individual or group interviews, or both, depending upon what is most suitable within the contexts. By asking participants in each stakeholder group about their role, it will be possible to tease out from the data their understanding of shared leadership and its usefulness to their school.

The findings chapter presents the views of the stakeholders in both schools including how they see the stakeholders' role and school leadership and ends with a comparison between the two schools.

The discussion and conclusion chapter discusses the study findings including how the stakeholders in both schools understand shared leadership and the benefits they see from their role. It also discusses the limitations of the study and articulates recommendations for future research.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The review of the literature covers both the meaning of shared/distributed leadership and the theoretical concepts behind them. After examining the theoretical concepts supporting the study, the research on stakeholder involvement has been analyzed, which includes the reasons why they need to be involved and how; the perceived advantages and disadvantages of involvement; and the constraints in its application.

### **Introduction**

Leaders' practices have an impact on schools (MacGilchrist, Mortimore, Savage and Beresford, 1995). Hallinger and Heck (1999) claim that leadership can influence schools in three areas: 1) purpose 2) structure 3) social networks and people. For example, leaders affect people by fostering group goals and modelling desired behavior. Leadership that provides individualized support, challenging work, and which fosters a shared mission in the school, contributes greatly to successful school improvement. Moreover, effective leadership is at the heart of schools where successful capable head teachers in high-achieving schools share certain characteristics and practices. For example, they plan, decide, monitor, evaluate operations, coordinate and organize activities in their schools (MacGilchrist et al., 1995). Furthermore, it is argued that leaders who encourage greater stakeholder involvement in decision-making create higher achieving schools (Hallinger and Heck, 1999). They establish partnership with stakeholders. Their students achieve high academic grades and their leader supports and encourages school development planning. (Day, 2000; MacGilchrist et al., 1995)

### ***Leadership and Leaders***

There is a difference between *leadership* as a concept and *leaders* as individuals with their own characteristics/qualities. There seems to be no one valid definition for both terms as “there is no one ‘correct’ meaning and differences in definition reflect different contexts as well as different perspectives” (Beare, Caldwell and Millikan, 1997, p. 24). Leadership is a concept and a set of practices that has been widely discussed and

analyzed in literature (Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach, 1999). The majority of the literature, however, discusses *models* of leadership, and in doing so; associate them with terms such as ‘effective leadership’ and ‘poor leadership.’

Leadership can be studied as an individual phenomenon and as an organizational phenomenon. The focus on organization as a key concept does not mean that management and leadership should be replaced. It is only that the attention should be more on organizations, which are essential for achieving any goals or change. Leadership and organization are linked. Leadership emphasizes the individual aspect, whereas institutional theories emphasize the context. Issues such as context, power and complexity have a better chance to be addressed if the focus is on organization than if it is on leadership. This shift in focus from management and leadership to organization is more “holistic” and provides “better insights for practice.” (Glatter, 2006, p. 8)

My main interest is in the practices not in leaders ‘per se’, although I realize the influence of people’s characteristics on their practices. Rather, I am looking at practices to help me find out whether shared leadership is embedded in these practices and whether they are beneficial for schools.

### ***Traditional Leadership vs. Shared Leadership***

The traditional leadership style is based on the belief that power is granted to the leader based on the customs of the past. Where leaders are having power and control because those before them had power and control. Leaders are followed primarily because of personal loyalty to the position and not the leader. In traditional leadership, leaders are on top of organizations, responsible for coordinating and organizing work. Leadership is a top down influencing process and leaders are held solely accountable for the organization’s success/failure. Whereas in shared leadership, leaders treat other members as relatively equal partners and see themselves as part of a team, working to achieve organizational goals. They likewise consult other members and take their opinions into consideration when making decisions. They share power and authority with them and

hold every one accountable for their actions. Influence is interactive and is not only hierarchical but can be seen in all directions within the organization.

In today's world, it has been argued that traditional leadership has become less effective in responding to the demands of most progressive organizations as society has become more complex. It requires educated individuals who are able to learn continuously (Fullan, 2001). Although head teachers are responsible for encouraging shared leadership in their schools, they still have the right to make final decisions when there are disagreements over leadership decisions (Wallace, 2001). Therefore, shared leadership has become a necessary means to help leaders cope with change and increased pressures (Fullan, 2001). Fullan discuss eight factors as affecting the initiation of change. These factors include: the presentation of new policies by federal, state or local authorities, Community pressures, external change agents, access to innovation, existence and quality of innovations, teacher advocacy, problem-solving and advocacy from central administration. Leaders play a significant role in determining which innovations will be implemented and are expected to lead the change process. The demands from the central government for quality assurance put pressures on school leaders, especially primary head teachers. Some primary school leaders who have the ability and the skills to do so managed to develop collaborative school culture and collective responsibility. Nonetheless, for example, Johnston and Pickersgill (1997) found that most primary school leaders were unable to do so which resulted in anxiety, isolation, work overload and low self esteem, "heads in primary schools are being severely taxed by the differentiated nature of the role and by its susceptibility to externally determined changes" (p.146). Thus, it is argued, contemporary leaders need to adopt a changing leadership role where they share authority and responsibility with other stakeholders.

Sharing leadership in schools is claimed to promote better performance. For example, consulting students about school matters enhances the development of higher order thinking skills, especially students' meta-cognitive development and their understanding of how they learn. They can reflect on and improve their learning by thinking about their own thinking and learning processes such as finding out the best way they can learn

(Flutter and Rudduck, 2004). Furthermore, involving teachers in decision-making improves teachers' learning and the school's self-renewal. When teachers meet, exchange ideas, materials etc., they learn from such interaction and choose those that they believe can promote the quality of their classroom instruction. They can also suggest and modify their own classroom practices. Such activities can clarify teachers' instructional method and purpose; thus, promoting their learning which is more likely to reflect positively on the school (Rosenholtz, 1991). Wallace (2001) reinforces these points by suggesting that applying shared leadership promotes student learning and results in increased teacher satisfaction and growth.

The findings of previous studies point to the significant role that stakeholders can play in promoting better student learning in schools. Authors have done extensive research on this area for many years, providing valuable information regarding stakeholders' particular roles, which are worth taking in consideration when investigating this topic. For example, in Wolfendale's (1992) research on family involvement in literacy, parental participation in children's educational development, changes attitudes to parents' rights and responsibilities and early identification of learning difficulties. The author helped to stimulate innovations such as the Parent Partnership initiatives throughout the UK and was able to influence policymakers based on knowledge of the real issues in children's education and the importance of the involvement of parents in this process. Therefore, finding out how stakeholders understand the concept of shared leadership and its effect on how they perceive their role is significant.

In educational institutions, it has been argued that the involvement of stakeholders can only be accomplished in a democratic school environment. Erickson et al. (1993) describe a democratic school as, "a school that recognizes the students', teachers' and parents' rights to be part of the decision-making process" (p. 135). So sharing leadership is associated with a democratic and empowering type of leadership. According to Dinham, Cairney, Craigie and Welson (1995), however, there is a lack of true, meaningful and representative involvement of stakeholders, especially students and parents in decision-making processes in schools. Therefore we need to understand the

processes of distributed leadership in many schools according to different types of involvement and representation.

### ***Different Accounts of Leadership and Power Sharing***

Some authors have a different name for this approach; Stoll (1999), for example, employs the term ‘Invitational Leadership’ as a substitute for shared leadership. She perceives this type of leadership as a powerful tool in promoting stakeholders’ involvement in schools and in a shared leadership approach. Invitational leadership involves the empowerment of others by giving them the opportunity and support to make decisions regarding organizational priorities.

Leithwood et al. (1999), on the other hand, talk about a transformational type of leadership, which seeks “commitments and capacities of organizational members” (p. 9). This is where leaders are committed to achieving organizational goals and where concepts such as authority, influence and power are not necessarily associated with individuals in leadership positions, rather, it is cooperation that is the key to achieving organizational objectives. Thus, there is a significant correlation between transformational leadership practices, empowerment and team effectiveness. The more members in a team are empowered the more effective they will be (Ozaralli, 2003). Therefore, transformational leadership entails developing, maintaining shared decision-making structures and processes, and building a collaborative culture and relationship with parents and the wider community (Leithwood et al., 1999).

Both approaches stress the need to share power, treat members as partners, create a positive school climate and trust colleagues. However, it is not clear that there are substantive theoretical differences in these accounts, since they are descriptive. A more widely used term, which is describing the same characteristics, is that of distributed leadership.

In the following section, the focus will be on discussing accounts of distributed leadership including: the various interpretations of it, its characteristics, the ways it can be distributed and other alternative approaches to its distribution in schools.

### **Distributed Leadership**

In the literature the term distributed leadership has been utilized in two ways depending on the purpose behind using it (Firestone and Martinez, 2009). First, in a normative way, where it is used as a synonym for democratic leadership and to enhance teachers' authority (Harris and Muijs, 2005). The purpose of leadership distribution here is to find out how leadership ought to be distributed to have its most positive effect on schools. It is similar to Pearce and Conger's (2003) business research on shared leadership. Second, in an analytic/descriptive way to understand the way leadership work is spread across multiple people (Spillane, Halverson and Diamond, 2001). The aim is to describe various ways in which leadership is distributed and its causes and outcomes. Moreover, research on the latter shows that leadership distribution is widespread in schools. Finally it shows that the distribution of responsibility and power between individual and distributed sources differs in response to conditions found in leadership situations (Spillane, Camburn and Pareja, 2009).

Distributed leadership entails more than just dividing responsibilities among members; it is about the interactions that take place among members in the organization:

*“Distributed leadership is not the same as dividing task responsibilities among individuals who perform defined and separate organizational roles, but rather it comprises dynamic interactions between multiple leaders and followers.”*  
(Timperley, 2009, p. 197)

This is in accordance with Gronn's notion of “*concertive action*” (Bennett, Wise, Woods and Harvey, 2003, p.7) as one distinctive feature of distributed leadership. Distributed leadership emphasizes leadership as “*an emergent property of a group or network of*



*interacting individuals*” (ibid, p.7). Concertive action refers to the synthesis that results from combined activity, where individuals employ their knowledge and expertise in their interactions: the result is greater than the sum of the individual actions. This notion is one factor that may differentiate distributed leadership from other concepts of leadership.

Another distinctive feature of distributed leadership is that it entails “*openness of the boundaries of leadership*” (ibid, p.7) that does not occur in a hierarchal formal structure context. It extends the web of leaders; we don’t have one leader but many leaders. Therefore, it is difficult to identify who or which individuals are considered to be leaders and contributing to leadership. There are no limits to the boundaries of distributed leadership and also to the limits of the community within which leadership is distributed. Finally, distributed leadership stresses that “*varieties of expertise are distributed across the many, not the few*”(ibid, p.7).

Leadership can be distributed in several ways (MacBeath, 2009). It can be distributed formally, where it is seen as “allocating responsibility and encouraging a sense of ownership while at the same time an agency constrained within the remit and boundaries of one’s designated role”(p.45). Empowerment and ownership result from engaging in an assigned role in the formal structure of school and are usually related to subject area.

However, how distributed leadership is understood and enacted is influenced by its social context. Leaders usually respond to the situation in which they find themselves. Distributing leadership is connected to other factors. Some are related to the head teacher such as experience, personality, etc. It is also connected to school culture and history such as recruitment, previous expectations etc. Writing from distributed cognition and activity theory perspectives Spillane et al. (2009) have argued that:

*“Leadership involves the identification, acquisition, allocation, coordination, and use of the social, material, and cultural resources necessary to establish the conditions for the possibility of teaching and learning.” (P.24)*

However, how judgments are made about the practices that they write about will vary from one socio-cultural context to the next. Finally, how distributed leadership is enacted will be related to external pressures such as external policies. With respect to this latter point Seashore et al. (2010) have provided evidence that principals are most efficient when they collaborate but that there is no one best way of distributing leadership.

Given the various ways in which the notion of distributed leadership has been defined in the literature and the many ways it can be enacted in practice, Anderson, Moore and Sun (2009) have argued that:

*“To really understand the distribution of leadership one needs to explore evidence of actual behaviors and influence associated with core leadership practices and specific focuses of school improvement activity. In sum, principals working in the context of similar organizational structures may enact theory leadership roles and engage in shared leadership in alternative ways.”(P.134)*

In essence this is an invitation to empirical research and it offers a counter to MacBeath’s conclusion that:

*“Distributed leadership remains a contested concept embracing a wide range of understandings and often bearing little apparent relationship to what happens in schools and classrooms.” (MacBeath, 2009, p.41)*

Furthermore, there is now less confidence that applying distributed leadership will enhance schools’ performance. Distributed leadership is:

*“An area no longer confident of its own value; greater distribution of leadership is not likely to be the answer to what ails schools.....it is a field, struggling with complex identity issues.” (Leithwood, Mascall and Strauss, 2009, p. 269)*

Hence the emphasis in this thesis is on how stakeholders interpret their roles and on whether, distributed leadership will always lead to more successful outcomes than other forms of leadership.

However, while there is no clear agreed definition or model of how distributed leadership can work in practice to produce beneficial outcomes there are some key issues and concepts that can be used as heuristic tools or lenses which can guide the study of the nature of distributed or shared leadership in specific school settings. In effect, they provide a core set of concepts that, arguably, any study of distributed or shared leadership would need to take into account.

### **Issues and Concepts Underpinning the Successful Application of Shared Leadership Model**

Applying a shared leadership approach successfully in any setting depends on how the micro processes are understood. They are present in leadership and management literature and act as forces behind the application of the shared leadership approach. Here, I refer to them as concepts and issues and they may be seen as dimensions that have to be taken into account in any attempt at distributed leadership. They include: Power-Control, Delegation, Empowerment, Trust and Communication as a practical aspect of sharing of leadership. Sharing of leadership requires sharing of power, authority and responsibilities between leaders and members, empowering other members, and trusting each other to accomplish assigned tasks and make the right decisions. This will not be achieved unless all parties involved communicate efficiently. Therefore, untying these concepts in order to understand the true meaning of each and how they interplay in real settings is vital in order to understand the reason(s) why shared leadership sometimes works in certain settings and other times, does not. They will be covered in the following section:

### ***The Power-Control Concept***

This concept is at the heart of shared leadership. Power means having the ability, knowledge or experience to influence other people and perhaps even control them through one's position. As Yukl (2001) defines it, "Power is usually used to describe the absolute capacity of an individual agent to influence the behavior or attitudes of one or more designated target persons at a given point in time"(p. 142).

The individual or the group that has the power in an organization has also the authority to make decisions and to determine certain aspects of the organization. Yukl (2001) explains that "a leader's authority usually includes the right to make particular types of decisions for the organization. A leader with direct authority over a target person has the right to make requests consistent with this authority, and the target person has the duty to obey"(p.142).

Similarly, the right of the agent to exert control over resources and materials is another basis of power. It is a significant source of influence in formal organizations and presents a leader's authority as a direct result of their official position in the organization (Yukl, 2001). Thus, power means that someone has the ability to influence other people whereas authority means that someone has the right to influence other people.

Power can arise from different sources. If a leader's power is derived from his or her position in the organization, this is called 'Positional Power'. Bush (1995) posits that "heads and principals possess authority over other staff because of their formal roles within schools and colleges" (p.30). The source of this influence can be from "legitimate authority", which entitles a leader to have "control over resources and rewards, control over punishments, control over information, and control over the physical work environment" (Yukl, 2001, p.144). At other times, however, a leader's powers are derived from the qualities and merits of that leader which is referred to as 'Personal Power.' Yukl (2001) explains that "power is derived in part from the opportunities inherent in a person's position in the organization, and in part from attributes of the agent and agent-target relationship"(p.144).

Both forms of power are rooted in the political model of educational management, which portrays organizations as political arenas. Undoubtedly, situations where individuals have different interests are sometimes inevitable (Bush, 1995). Blasé and Anderson (1995) assert that “all in all, micro political perspectives have emphasized the dialectical, interactive, multidirectional, strategic, conflictive, ideological and interpretive/perceptual aspects of organizations as they relate to the use of power”(p.3).

Studies show that effective leaders depend more on personal power than on positional power (Yukl, 2001). It had been noted, however, that there are leaders who are more inclined toward positional power yet they are still considered effective because they are able to run and manage successful organizations. This will be explored in Chapter 5.

The way that members of an organization react to leaders utilizing power varies. For example, individuals usually respond to positional power by submission; doing what is asked of them but virtually without any motivation and with minimum effort. Yukl (2001) calls this ‘Compliance Influence’ and describes it as “an outcome in which the target is willing to do what the agent asks but in a pathetic rather than enthusiastic (way) about it and will make only a minimal effort”(p.143).

In utilizing this kind of power, the leaders could be depriving organizations of the possible contributions that other stakeholders could offer, since input will be limited to the individual personalities and experiences of the leaders. It is then inevitable that such practice will generate tension and dissatisfaction among stakeholders that eventually turns into resentments and possible conflicts in the future. Having planted the seed of discontent, the leaders only get what they asked for instead of reaping more.

Power changes over time due to changing conditions brought about by the actions of people. There are two theories that explain how power is gained or lost:

1. *Social Exchange Theory* (Hollander, 1958,1979 and Jacobs, 1970)

This theory is based on situations where leaders are expected to work with other stakeholders towards achieving organizational goals. A leader gains or loses power based on his or her ability to achieve these goals. People continuously engage in social exchanges and through these social interactions, material and psychological benefits are exchanged. Furthermore, they establish expectations about performance and equity in the interactions. As explained by Yukl (2001), “member expectations about what leadership role a person should have in the group are influenced by the person’s loyalty and demonstrated competence” (p.154). Nonetheless, this theory did not explain how reciprocal influence processes affect a leader’s reward and transfer of power.

2. *Strategic Contingencies Theory* (Hickson, Hinings, Lee, Schneck and Pennings,1971)

This theory explains how some organizational sub-units gain or lose power to influence vital decisions such as allocation of resources. This power is based on three factors: how central the sub-unit is within the workflow; experiences in dealing with problems; and how unique the unit’s expertise is. It is a given that leaders need to have power. The amount of power required, however, depends on what needs to be accomplished and on the leader’s skills in making use of what power is available. Moreover, different situations require varying the amount of power the leader needs in order to be effective. Yukl (2001) claims that too much positional power held by an individual or a group will cause them to have the tendency to depend more on their positional power instead of being able to develop personal power and learn how to gently, but successfully, apply other approaches such as persuasion.

Thus, sharing leadership is really about power sharing. All involved depend on the leader and on how he or she uses the power vested on him or her. There are times, however, when power and authority are employed by the leader to control other people in the organization. In such scenarios, the leader decides on all aspects of the organization and takes all the responsibilities associated with that. Shared leadership is not applied where the organization is under authoritarian management instead of the more preferred democratic leadership. The leader at times delegates certain amount of power and

authority to other members to allow them to carry out specific duties. In this case, the leader consults other members, allows them to participate in making decisions and holds them accountable for the responsibilities assigned to them. When members and the leader work as a team towards achieving organizational goals, then the organization is running in a participative way. Such process of power sharing signifies the corner stone of employing the shared leadership approach. This approach demands that leaders not only share power but also delegate responsibilities to members of the organization.

### ***Delegation***

Delegation is a significant part of distributed/shared leadership and it occurs only in a non-hierarchical formal context. It does not occur in a hierarchical formal context because all power is vested in the leader who has all the power and authority to make all the key decisions and does not share his/her leadership practices with the other stakeholders. Delegation is necessary for the applications of distributed/shared leadership because in order for senior leaders to share leadership with the other stakeholders they need to delegate part of their duties and power to the other stakeholders. Without doing that they cannot apply shared/distributed leadership. Here the key is not so much in the delegation of roles but of power. In this way, the stakeholders can influence the decisions, actions and direction of the organization and are likewise held correspondingly accountable. So, it is a type of power sharing where leaders allow individuals in the organization to make decisions that are usually made by the leaders themselves. Yukl (2001) claims that, “Delegation is a distinct type of power-sharing process that occurs when a manager gives subordinates the responsibility and authority for making some types of decisions formerly made by the manager”(p.80). It is another form of participation other than joint decision-making and consultation, but it differs in the sense that delegation only takes place with a leader toward his or her subordinates; whereas the previous two forms also occur between peers and supervisors aside from the subordinates.

Also, in delegating effectively, leaders need to outline duties to members clearly, monitor progress and provide continuous support.

Moreover, delegation is vital to the application of shared leadership due to its numerous benefits. One distinctive advantage that delegation offers is the improvement in the quality of decisions (Yukl, 2001). Additionally, delegation reduces workload and saves time. Similarly, it promotes greater commitment from the followers with regard to the efficient implementation of decisions, as they feel more involved in the process.

Sometimes, however, the leader might encounter difficulty in delegating responsibilities for certain reasons. For instance, there are sensitive tasks that involve confidential and/or significant information that cannot easily be entrusted to just any individual. There are also tasks that require a certain level of expertise so this can prove to be a challenge for leaders whose members lack the expertise needed for such tasks. Nevertheless, delegating can be utilized as a valuable means for motivating stakeholders into tapping their potentials as well as realizing and maximizing their skills and expertise. Proper control and limitation are needed, however, as delegation has to be in accordance with the goals of the organization and its values (Yukl, 2001). In this regard, leadership sharing entails delegation; so if leaders refuse to assign responsibilities to the other members, then shared leadership is not being applied. Shared leadership is genuinely employed when individuals feel they are being given the opportunity to make a difference in the school and thus feel empowered.

### ***Empowerment***

Empowerment means giving a person the power or authority to act. It involves “the perception by members of an organization that they have the opportunity to determine their work roles, accomplish meaningful work, and influence important events” (Yukl, 2001, p. 80). As such, it is an important element of participative leadership. Moreover, it serves to link delegation and power because delegation suggests that the one with the power is the one who delegates; whereas empowerment entails real sharing where people feel that they have the power and can act with authority. Additionally, leaders delegate as a way to share power with other people within the organization; whereas, empowerment is a psychological state where individuals feel that they have been given the power/authority to decide over things. As Yukl (2001) stated, “psychological



empowerment describes how the intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy of people are influenced by leadership behavior, job characteristics, organization structure, and their own needs”(p. 106). This means that a leader’s behavior has an impact on how members feel about their work and needs. Sharing leadership requires empowerment of stakeholders; as a result, stakeholders get that sense of belonging that further fuels their motivation immensely.

It is important to note that empowerment is much like delegation in a sense that it can likewise be used as a valuable means for motivating members of an organization. As with delegation, however, its use needs to be limited within organizational goals and values. Although shared leadership demands that school leaders should empower stakeholders and encourage them to play a more active role in the school, empowerment depends on certain important factors. These include the structure of the organization - whether it is centralized or not; the nature of the job; and the character of the employees (Yukl, 2001).

School leaders can heighten empowerment among stakeholders by getting them involved in decisions that affect them, delegating responsibilities and providing advice and support as necessary (Yukl, 2001). Consequently, these aspects will lead to improved operation of the school.

Power sharing, delegation and empowerment need to be accompanied by a degree of trust amongst organization members in order to share leadership. Organizations members need to trust each other to carry out the assigned tasks.

### ***Trust***

Trusting someone means having the confidence to rely on this person to do or say the right thing. There is also faith in the person’s abilities (Cummings and Bromily, 1996).

In schools, trust can be seen in relation to various reference groups: students, teachers, head teacher, administrators, the governing body and parents. Trust is necessary between and within each group. For example, teachers trust the head teacher to act with their best

interest in mind while they feel that they can depend on their colleague's honesty and support.

Trust is a vital element in the application of shared leadership approach. Head teachers need to trust the members in sharing power and responsibilities with them. In an academic institution, the trust between the head teacher and the staff plays a significant role in maintaining effectiveness within the school. The head teacher plays a major part in developing that trust which may be influenced by three factors:

1. The head teacher communicates a collective vision.
2. Members share common values with the head teacher who consults the staff before making any decisions.
3. Trust in the head teacher is associated with the head teacher's efficiency (Gillespie and Mann, 2004).

In primary schools, trust exists when members share professional values with each other as this practice leads to the development of trust amongst them. Consequently, people who trust each other are more willing to give and receive criticism from each other in order to improve practice (Little, 1990). These are vital to employing shared leadership within an organization.

Trust, however, can be seen in both positive and negative light, particularly with regard to the parent's role in a school. For instance, Crozier (2000) mentioned that working-class parents feel less knowledgeable about educational issues. Thus, they trust the school to do the right thing and prefer not to interfere in the schoolwork; middle-class parents, on the other hand, are more confident and comfortable to pry on school matters. These parents do not trust the staff completely to do their job impeccably so they always try to force their opinion upon the school. Trusting schools to do the right job, nevertheless, does not mean one should not share leadership, as there are no contradictions or conflict between the two. Being more involved is not an indication of lack of trust on the school to manage its own operations or on the capabilities of its leaders.

There are three levels of trust that generally develop at different stages in a relationship:

1. *Provisional trust* develops at the beginning of a relationship and depends on the wish of the person/s involved to maintain the relationship and not to break it.
2. *Knowledge-based trust* occurs when individuals get to know one another and feel that they are able to foresee how the other is likely to behave in a given situation.
3. *Identity-based trust* is established when a deep identification is developed between two people and when there is complete understanding and appreciation of the other person's wishes and intentions (Lewicki and Bunker1996).

Shared leadership is likely to occur at the second stage. It is not certain, however, if the third stage can be attained easily in private international schools as this stage requires significant investment in time. The rapid changes in today's world could delimit people from establishing this type of relationship that can only be achieved over time. In academic institutions, there are other factors that yield influence on trust like the parent's socio-economic status, as previously cited.

Some authors have differing perspectives on trust. Atkinson and Butcher (2003), for instance, describe two types of trust: impersonal and personal trust; claiming that there is no contradiction between these two types:

1. *Impersonal trust* can be taken from reputations, roles or systems from which assumptions are drawn about an individual's trustworthiness. For example, when parents say that they trust the head teacher to do the right thing, they actually trust the knowledge of that head teacher and the authority from which he/she earned the role of a head teacher and not necessarily based on the abilities and motives of that head teacher.
2. *Personal trust*, on the other hand, is drawn from interactions that have taken place between an individual and another person, within a specific relationship. This trust is essential for the development and maintenance of cooperation and communication in effective organizations (Baier, 1985).

Presenting various views about trust is important to show the complex and multifaceted nature of it. This shows that there is no one single correct definition of trust because it is based on several factors; it differs based on the expectations seized in various kinds of relationships and it changes over time. It depends on the way leaders and members view trust and how they react to it. Without trust, shared leadership might not be accomplished. Thus, understanding the various meanings and stages of trust is significant as it characterizes well-functioning organizations. It promotes collaboration and communication, improves relationships and allows individuals to concentrate on tasks at hand. All are significant for sharing leadership (Tschannen and Hoy, 1998).

It will be difficult for these concepts to materialize unless all organization members communicate with each other. Communication is something that stakeholders utilize in order to share leadership amongst them.

### ***Communication***

Communication requires certain elements to occur: at least two parties with the need to communicate; a channel to utilize and an assurance that messages are sent and received accurately. Communication can either be verbal or nonverbal. The former utilizes words that can be in spoken or written form. For example, verbal communication occurs between parents and with class teachers while children are being dropped off or picked up where these adults are given the chance to exchange information and express feelings like anxieties and excitement. The latter is more actual or discernible like making provisions for coffee-making facilities within the school's premises for parents to convey a clear message that they are welcome, appreciated and that their opinions matter (Davies, 1994).

Establishing communication is the first practical step towards instituting shared leadership. Sharing power and duties cannot take place without having the leaders convey and exchange messages with the other members of the organization. Moreover, communication allows people to share their thoughts with the others in the organization and makes it possible to clear up any misunderstandings. It likewise aids in finding

solutions to problems and in attaining shared goals. More importantly, it creates a friendly and cooperative organizational environment (Riches, 1997).

Effective communication within an academic institution necessitates certain characteristics: (a) the head teacher fosters free and open exchange of information; (b) the school is committed to maintain ethical communication with all people concerned; and (c) messages are created and processed in a timely and efficient manner. In this regard, successful application of shared leadership approach requires these characteristics. Communication is, therefore, necessary in creating any form of partnership with stakeholders since doing so paves the way toward establishing shared leadership. Nonetheless, the leader plays a major role in establishing and maintaining communication with the stakeholders. Therefore, leaders need to have good communication skills, which include having the ability to effectively listen to others; communicate non-verbally and negotiate efficiently (Riches, 1997).

Two related factors emerge from having proper communication amongst stakeholders. One of these is stakeholders' voice, where stakeholders, through communication, can voice their opinions regarding their roles and school matters. The other is shared goal, where stakeholders get the opportunity to agree/disagree on common school goals. Allowing stakeholders to voice their opinions is more likely to help unite them towards achieving common goals. These factors are important for the successful application of shared leadership.

### ***Stakeholders' Voice***

Proper communication exists within the school when the leaders encourage stakeholders to voice their opinions on issues freely; where these views are taken into consideration when decisions are being made; and the stakeholders feel respected, appreciated and confident that they can express their views openly and receive constructive feedback. This scenario likewise shows that power is shared and that a high level of trust is maintained among school members. Thus, stakeholders' voice can be seen as a product of trust, effective communication and shared power.

Listening to stakeholders' voices is crucial to leadership sharing and in upholding a positive school environment. Exchanging opinions and views is required in sharing leadership. Nevertheless, listening to stakeholders' views and seeing things from their perspective are not the same as allowing stakeholders to participate in the decision making process with regard to school issues. The leaders may reserve the right to make the final decision but listening and considering the other stakeholders' views can be a tool that leaders can employ in order to encourage stakeholders to become more involved in the organization. This, however, has to be a continuous process that regularly occurs between the leaders and the other stakeholders to unite them to move toward attaining shared goals.

### ***Shared Goals***

It is imperative that members of an organization agree on organizational goals and objectives. Management theories consider this element as a significant factor in establishing effective organizations. For instance, in the Collegial Model, goals are determined through an agreement amongst the organization's members and decisions are reached based on agreed goals where leaders are expected to play a major role in its facilitation (Bush, 1995). Members with clear goals, including long and short-term goals, characterize creative organizations.

In addition to the previous concepts that underpin shared leadership, there are factors that inhibit/facilitate the application of it:

- When there is not enough knowledge and skills necessary for applying shared leadership; the absence of goal alliance between team members and the organization; and when there is a lack of openness towards shared leadership (Conger and Pearce, 2003).
- Not all people possess traits and capabilities necessary for carrying out certain tasks in the same way that not all leaders fit the leadership model required for shared leadership.

- Sometimes teachers and students resist parental involvement. While parental apathy and the traditional expectations from the principal continue to persist. Having parents on Councils or school teams do not ensure equity issues such as representing diversity of the community (Blasé and Blasé, 1999).
- Applying shared leadership creates conflicting demands on head teachers because they are supposed to be on top of the organization and at the same time, they are expected to interact with other members as equals, which could confuse and negatively affect group members. Such conflicting demands could challenge their own beliefs with regard to shared leadership. The tasks that head teachers carry out in employing shared leadership include conducting extra meetings, sending out correspondences, requesting further explanations are hardly acknowledged as leadership practices but are more often considered as personal rather than leadership skills. Due to these contradictions, shared leadership practices become lost (Fletcher and Kaufer, 2003).
- Additional factors include the lack of time due to other commitments that are either family-or work-related (Cyster, Clift and Battle, 1997). Accountability can likewise serve to constrain successful leadership sharing as responsibility falls on the shoulders of *all* team members (Johnston and Pickersgill, 1997). Shared leadership also necessitates head teachers to support stakeholders in both tangible and intangible means (Crozier, 2000).

*In summary*, the model of shared leadership as presented by the reviewed literature suggests that:

- Power is shared with other members;
- Duties are shared amongst members;
- Everyone is held accountable;
- Members are empowered;
- Members trust each other;
- Proper channels of communication amongst members are established.

In previous sections I have discussed the meaning of sharing and distributing leadership and the concepts behind it. However, the question still left to answer is who should leadership be shared with? In the following section I will discuss the people that leadership could be shared with in school, including the reasons why they need to be involved, the areas that they are involved in, and the advantages/disadvantages of their involvement.

## **The Argument for the Active Role of Stakeholders in Schools**

### ***Governing Body***

Members need to share leadership because they play a significant role in setting goals and policies for schools. They are responsible for providing guidance, support and encouragement to schools. They are required to share responsibilities as part of a team and maintain good relationships with the staff and the head teacher. Stability is necessary for the effectiveness of the governing body (Earley, 1994).

### ***Head Teacher***

Their role requires them to ensure that they are involved in the school in meaningful ways instead of being confined to overseeing daily trivial matters. In this regard, it is imperative for head teachers to have ample training and development programs and more importantly, a way should be devised to monitor these (Earley, 1994). It is equally important to devote time and attention to foster their relationship with the governing body (Clegg and Billington, 1997). Head teachers sometimes feel that governors are either interfering too much in every facet of the school or too detached that they are reluctant to take on more responsibilities. This appears to happen with well-established governing bodies whose members have difficulties in coping with changes. Head teachers need to share ideas and express their support to the governing body in its work. Written reports submitted to the governors should not be limited to facts and past activities but should likewise include strategies, future plans and philosophies. The role of the head teacher is to encourage the governors to be more in touch and updated on the daily activities of the



school; whereas governors need to focus on determining what the people can do best and to clarify organizational goals (Hargrave, 1994).

### ***Teachers***

Educators need to be both informed and consulted on virtually all school issues (Clegg and Billington, 1997). They need to have their share in leadership as effective schools apparently employ an effective development plan that has certain characteristics:

- Teachers are involved in the decision-making process regarding school policy and practice. The more they have the sense of ownership and are more involved, the more effective the school is likely to be;
- They share leadership;
- They are involved in the school-based management processes and take part in the management and plan preparations; and
- They have a sense of control and confidence in the planning process because they are actively involved (MacGilchrist et al., 1995).

The teacher's role, however, has shifted from being '*instrumental*' to that of '*community facilitator*' (Long, 1986), especially with regard to parental involvement. Therefore, they need training and support in order to be able to work effectively, particularly with parents (Wolfendale, 1992).

### ***Students***

Children have the right to voice their opinions about aspects related to their learning; the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989, article 12) noted that "states parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child". Nevertheless, the extent of students' involvement is influenced by the culture of the school. Schools that encourage student involvement strongly believe that students play a central role and that the school belongs to the students. They also believe that students are responsible for making the school a success (Day, 2000). Nonetheless, there is a difference between student consultation and student participation. The former implies that students are

assumed to have important views about school issues where their opinions are encouraged and heard. The latter demands that students directly participate in school activities where their opinions are valued (Flutter and Rudduck, 2004).

Students are capable of engaging in insightful discussions about aspects related to their learning (McCall, Smith, Stoll, Thomas, Sammons, Smees, MacBeath, Boyd and MacGilchrist, 2001). They need to be involved in the school's evaluation process in order to evaluate their own learning and those of others (Horne and Brown, 1997). They can provide insightful views and ideas about their learning and teaching and their perceptions of school and community (Rudduck, Chaplain and Wallace, 1996).

Listening to the voices of the students and considering their views do not only help schools to better understand their responses to schooling, but also helps practitioners to ascertain the best strategies to use in their classrooms and to concentrate more on learning. As Flutter and Rudduck (2004) put it, "rather than being seen as dependent and incapable, pupils are regarded as individuals possessing the right to be heard and to be respected as well as the responsibility to act in ways that align with the best interests of their school community"(p.134).

Getting the students more involved likewise enhances their sense of ownership since they are capable of making the right judgments on their own levels of performance. They should be involved in classroom management techniques as well as in assessments in order to understand the criteria by which they are being assessed. In doing so, sense of responsibility is encouraged and independent learning takes place in accordance to the national curriculum requirement (Horne and Brown, 1997). Although students should be involved in school operations, their views should not be considered as final when it comes to substantial changes on how the school functions (Nieto, 1994).

## ***Parents***

Wolfendale (1992) claims that parents have the right to voice their opinions about school matters; to have a choice regarding educational spending; to be represented; and to share power with governing bodies.

Head teachers need to keenly involve parents due to these reasons:

- It allows them to learn and to get to know how the school works. Moreover, conflicts are better resolved if all parties are involved, including the parents, to allow them to work together as well as to show respect and gain understanding. Parents play a significant role in supporting their children's learning as they care most about their children's well being and are well-motivated with their children's best interest in mind. As family, they are the ones who are supposed to know their offspring best including their needs and they serve as the primary educators of their own children (Wolfendale, 1992).
- They seek to provide their children with a better learning environment so they offer assistance in increasing adult-student ratios in school, provide extra resources or extend help to further understand the children and improve their learning processes (Rivalland, 1989)

It is important to note, however, that parental partnership is distinctive from parental involvement. Being involved does not make parents as partners in the organization who have their share in school leadership. Partnership between parents and schools is established when parents actively participate in decision making, have equal expertise and strengths, are allowed to contribute and receive services, given their share of responsibilities and are accountable for their actions and decisions (Wolfendale, 1983).

The way a school relates to parents depends on the nature, cultural and contextual circumstances of the academic institution. For this reason, a school needs to establish a shared and approved vision with regard to how the organization wishes to relate with the parents. Creating the right relationship between schools and parents requires head teachers to have confidence in the parents and allow a degree of power to be shared with

them. Schools that are into building real partnerships with the parents tend to be more successful and effective than those that prefer not to do so. A genuine relationship entails sharing of responsibility, ownership, power, joint action, and a degree of accountability and shared goals (Cheshire, Knight and Sugden, 1993). This means that schools need to seek dialogue with parents to listen to their views instead of merely informing them on what goes on in the school (Clegg and Billington, 1997). Moreover, parents who are part of the governing bodies need to be provided with supportive training programs that would help them perform their responsibilities (Wolfendale, 1992).

Parents, however, are not always perceived in a positive light. As noted in Fine (1997):

*“Sometimes parents are organized as advocates for their children, other times as teachers’ bashers, often as bureaucracy busters, more recently, as culture-carriers, increasingly, as consumers...They are usually not welcomed, by schools, to the critical and serious work of rethinking educational structures and practices.” (P.460)*

They are not always regarded as equals by educators and are seldom permitted to have strong opinions and power. Real parental involvement requires commitment with parents to organize, restructure and achieve successful outcomes in schools. Parents need to be recognized as a political force that also yields power and impact on schools. Together with educators, parents need to work as equal partners with identical powers for their contribution to have meaning and relevant impact. (Fine, 1997)

Furthermore, the unfavorable attitudes that teachers may have toward parents are apparently borne out of their concerns. One such concern is that parents could undermine the teachers’ work once they get involved in the classroom. Conflict can likewise arise sometimes as parents are not well informed, which affects their views. It should be considered, however, that active parents are few and that they do not represent all parents. (Wolfendale, 1992)

## Summary

My understanding of the concept of shared leadership is that it involves the following aspects: adopting an open door policy with stakeholders (Everard and Morris, 1996); providing students with a variety of activities with different learning styles and involving them in assessment in order to encourage ownership of the process (Horne and Brown, 1997). It also entails involving parents in school governance decision making about school policies (Clegg and Billington, 1997); and finally inspiring others, initiating discussions and working to ensure that the school develops a shared vision (Blasé and Blasé, 1999).

This review has shown that there is no commonly accepted definition of distributed or shared leadership and that this is because context may be crucial to how such leadership is enacted. That said, this review has identified core concepts that, arguably should be present in any distributed leadership practices and that these can act as a heuristic in the study of leadership practices in schools. It has also made the argument as to why there is a *prima facie* case for thinking that distributed leadership may lead to successful school outcomes and is, therefore, important to study.

However, the current literature has limitations in demonstrating how a range of stakeholders understands shared leadership and its usefulness to their schools. It is essential to determine if the stakeholders' understanding of the concept of shared leadership is analogous to how it is represented in various forms and models in the literature.

Therefore, by asking stakeholders about how they view their current roles and what they believe their roles *should* be, including the advantages and disadvantages of their current and ideal roles, I will be able to answer my research questions:

1. How is shared leadership conceptualized in school?
2. What practices comprise shared leadership in schools?
3. In particular, can questions one and two be usefully analysed through the concepts of Power-Control, Delegation, Empowerment, Trust and Communication? And,
4. In what ways, if any, is shared leadership beneficial for these schools?

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

The methodology of this thesis is divided into four sections. The first section discusses the research design and the approach utilized in the case study; followed by a sub-section on the schools. The second section explores the stakeholders while the third section is a discussion of the data collection method employed with five sub-sections: individual interviews, focus group interviews, development of the questions, piloting, facilitation of the interviews and ethical consideration and dilemmas. Finally, the fifth section contains the study analysis framework.

#### **Research Design philosophy and the Case Study Approach**

According to Sarantakos (1998), “Reality is socially constructed through peoples’ interactions, interpreted through the actors and is based on the definition people attach to it”(p. 36). With this in mind, adopting an interpretive approach, which perceives reality as subjective and in peoples’ minds, seemed ideal (Sarantakos, 1998). This approach is descriptive seeking to find answers as to how people feel about things; what their beliefs are; and the meanings and values that they attach to different aspects of their lives. As Gay (1996) puts it, “interpretive science tries to capture reality as it is, namely as seen and experienced by the respondents.”(p. 46). Therefore, the appropriate approach that meets the objectives of this study was qualitative instead of quantitative. Gay (1996) supports this type of research in his claim that:

*“Qualitative research involves intensive data collection, that is, collection of extensive data on many variables over an extended period of time, in a naturalistic setting.... The variables being investigated are studied where they naturally occur, as they naturally occur, not in researcher-controlled environments under researcher-controlled conditions, as is the case with quantitative studies.”(P. 208)*

This approach allows an investigation by means of data gathering from the participants' natural environment instead of a controlled one. The aim was to eliminate control over anything to make the respondents feel as comfortable as possible; which can be achieved in their own environment as opposed to having to adjust to a different or new one. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), the interpretive and constructivist paradigm that structures qualitative research suggests that there are multiple realities. The process should occur in a natural setting where the researcher and the participant would develop understanding, "the constructivists paradigm assumes a relativist... a subjectivist epistemology... and a naturalistic set of methodological procedures..."(p. 21)

In this regard, the method for this study must not adopt a deductive, controlled approach that focuses on collection of numerical data, as it would be unsuitable for the investigation of the topic at hand. It is crucial to an understanding of distributed leadership that stakeholders' views are seen against the background of their understanding of schools, management and teaching in relation to their world views and assumptions about these matters. In this context, qualitative methods promote better understanding of the way things are as well as why things (and people) are the way they are (Gay, 1996). This method allowed me, as the researcher, to understand different views of shared leadership and the reasons for them by gaining a more detailed understanding of the topic through the collection of rich data. The process produces descriptive data, based on the respondents' own words regarding their views and experiences - which are exactly what the study required.

In lieu of this, the role of the researcher had been taken into account, as it is vital to this type of method since qualitative research presupposes a value-laden approach. This is one aspect that tends to turn critics against this type of research as the data obtained are classified and filtered according to the researcher's perception of one's self, the others and the world in general. As Denzin and Lincoln (2000) state:

*"There is no clear window into the inner life of an individual; any gaze is always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity."*



*There are no objective observations; only observations socially situated in the words of-and between-the observer and the observed.”(P. 19)*

In turn this requires a degree of self-reflexivity on the part of the researcher, making clear their own background and where possible the assumptions they make before and during the research process. To this end, the researcher will consider these aspects when reflecting on the research process at the end of the thesis.

A case study approach seemed to be the best approach to be employed in gaining in-depth knowledge about the topic for its strong sense of reality and because it can be utilized as a tool for action (Day, 2000). As Gay (1996) states, “a case study is the in-depth investigation of one ‘unit’, e.g., individual, group, institution, organization, program, document, and so forth”(p. 219).

Two schools were chosen as case studies in which the views of stakeholders in both schools could be ascertained. In this way an institutional comparison could be made to see whether factors unique to each school colored the views of stakeholders within them. It also enabled a comparison between the schools in terms of the nature of their leadership which could have a bearing on question four as to whether shared leadership leads to school improvement.

In selecting the schools for this study, several factors had been taken into account to meet the requirements of its objectives. Private and independent institutions may be considered ideal because as with a business organization, leadership must be sensitive to the various stakeholders since their survival depends on them. This is especially the case with parents who may, on the basis of their payment of fees, feel that they also have a voice in the school. International schools also have diverse parent, student and teacher bodies that may make leadership more difficult and hence may provide something of a laboratory on the nature and difficulties in implementing shared leadership. Primary schools were chosen, as parents tend to be more involved in their children’s education, at primary

school age. Finally, schools were chosen that incorporate specific and special programs that require stakeholders involvement especially parents.

### ***The Case Study-The Schools***

In facilitating the purpose of this study, one way to understand shared leadership in schools is to investigate by selecting schools and exploring stakeholders' views of their roles and the perceived advantages and disadvantages. Doing so will indicate the prospect of utilizing shared leadership in schools. A case study approach in research is claimed to aid the researcher to focus on a specific condition and to identify the different interactive processes at work (Bell, 1999). Maintaining focus on in-depth analysis of the various views of stakeholders, factors underpinning them, and the way they interplay in two case schools will indicate if the concept of shared leadership can be understood in similar ways in the two schools and if so why. Employing a case study approach is more likely to achieve this compared to other methods. There seems to be a disagreement among researchers, however, regarding whether we can generalize from a case study approach. Critics claim that it is not always possible to generalize from case study findings. Others disagree, nevertheless, like Denscombe (1998) who claims that the extent to which results from a case study can be generalized to other case studies depend on the degree to which the case study is comparable to others of the same kind. My view is also consistent with Bassey (1981) who holds similar views as Denscombe's but uses the term 'reliability' instead of 'generalizability', "An important criterion for judging the merit of a case study is the extent to which the details are sufficient and appropriate for a teacher working in a similar situation to relate his decision making to that described in the case study, the reliability of a case study is more important than its generalizability"(p.85). Moreover, Bassey claims that case studies are valid forms of educational research if they are "carried out systematically and critically," as they are "aimed at the improvement of education, reliable, and if by publication of the findings they extend the boundaries of existing knowledge"(p. 86). Two International private schools in Cyprus had been selected as case studies for this thesis. They are referred to here as school "A" and school "B". It is important to note that in the light of the first round of evidence collected from school "A", it felt necessary to develop the questions further in order to explore new

aspects of distributed leadership. The reasons for this and the changes that were made to the questions is explained later in this chapter. Therefore, a second round of evidence was collected from school “B”. Also, the evidence collected from school “A” was reanalyzed in the light of the developed questions.

### ***School “A”***

Is comprised of two departments: the Primary School Department that encompasses grade reception class until grade six; and the Senior School Department that covers classes seven until thirteen where students get their A levels. A head teacher is in charge of the Primary School Department while a director is responsible for the administration of the whole school. A school Council oversees both departments; it consists of eleven members; two of which are permanent members from the Church while the other ten members are Cypriot alumni elected by other Council members. Members can be on the Council for a maximum period of four years where two members are replaced annually.

The study was carried out specifically in the Primary School Department where the number of students at the time of the study was one hundred and ninety-five children/students. These children come from diversified backgrounds and nationalities such as those from Russia, United Kingdom, the Far East, the Middle East, United States of America, and Cyprus. The school has British qualified and trained staff with many years of experience and it offers a British Curriculum.

### ***School “B”***

Is comprised of three departments: Kindergarten, Primary and High School where the students get their A levels. A Cypriot privately owns the school. There is usually a principal for the whole school but at the time of the study there was only a deputy head who is in charge of all departments. The school also has British qualified and trained staff with many years of experience and it offers a British Curriculum.

The study was carried out in the Primary School Department where the number of children/students at the time of the study was one hundred and fifty eight children. It

covers grade one until grade six. The children come from different backgrounds and nationalities similar to these in school “A”.

School “A”, at the time of the study had a low teacher-student ratio and it needed the help and involvement of all stakeholders, especially parents. Whereas school “B” provides specialized programs for gifted students, children with learning difficulties and English as a second language through its special Learning Center. The Center works in partnership with parents who are regularly informed about their children’s progress and can have access to their children’s records at any time. There are seminars and workshops to help parents cope with their children’s learning difficulties where parents are equipped with strategies to meet the learning and behavioral difficulties of their children. The Center offers also individual consultations to parents. Nevertheless, they have all or most of the characteristics shared by other schools. For example, they have a head teacher (a leader); principal; teachers; parents and students. Each has a certain role to play in school and each might have some type of leadership role to play. Although the schools are unique and seem to possess aspects that are thought to be required in order to apply shared leadership, it is unsure whether these aspects are sufficient in order to apply shared leadership in these schools.

### **The Stakeholders**

In school “A” include: eleven Council members; the director; the Primary School including the head teacher; eleven teachers; one hundred and ninety-five children and all their parents. The stakeholders in school “B” include: the owner, the deputy head, eight teachers, one hundred and fifty-eight children and their parents. There is no Council in school “B”. As these are all the people who have interest in the schools and whose views and perceptions about shared leadership and their role are important, they were all approached and asked if they were willing to participate in the study. The director and the head teacher in school “A” and the owner and the deputy head in school “B” were contacted either by letters or e-mails or both and were invited to take part in the study (Appendix2). All parents and teachers were sent a letter (Appendix 3) and the director

contacted the Council members in school “A”. The children were addressed by the researcher as a class. The final study sample from school “A”, however, includes: two Council members (one of which is the Council Chairman), the head teacher of the Primary School Department, nine teachers (teachers: 1,2,3,5,6,7 were older and very experienced, with more than twenty years of teaching experience and British qualified whereas teachers 9,4 were young and inexperienced with few years of experience and only teacher 9 was British qualified), seventeen parents and seventeen children. Whereas the final study sample from school “B” includes: the owner, the deputy head, six teachers (teachers 1,2,3,4,5 were very experienced, with about fifteen years of experience whereas teacher 6 was young and inexperienced with few years of experience and not British qualified), eleven parents and their children.

Several reasons were presented by a number of stakeholders in school “A” for declining to take part in the study. The director of the whole school, for one, claimed to be overloaded with work. Two teachers could not participate, as they could not squeeze in the interviews into their schedule. Many parents likewise failed to participate in the interviews claiming work and/or family commitments as written on the returned replies. Nevertheless, there were other reasons why many parents opted not to participate in the study as found out during the parents’ interviews. Some parents did not like or were not comfortable with the idea of being interviewed or tape-recorded. On the other hand, there were those who were concerned about the sort of questions that will be asked which could inadvertently lead them to criticize the head teacher or the school. Some parents were even afraid that taking part in the interviews might negatively reflect on their children one way or another. Despite the assurance offered to the participants regarding the confidentiality of all information gathered during the interviews, some parents were still anxious that the information they gave would leak out; which could cause problems with their relationship with the school. A number of children did not participate because their parents did not allow them to do so for unknown reasons. Nonetheless, it had been noted that the parents who took part in the interviews in both schools were the same parents who allowed their children to be interviewed.

When preparing my research questions I had two options. I could ask stakeholders questions about the concepts that I have identified in the literature such as power, delegations, etc., or I could ask them about what they do and what others do in school, and questions that relate to key feature of distributed/shared leadership from which I can make inferences about distributed leadership. I thought the first option would be difficult for them, as they would probably not understand the terms used. The second option seemed more reasonable to me because I worked as a teacher before the time of the study. I know teachers concerns and interests and their relationships with school leadership. Also, as a parent of children in school I know parents' concerns and expectations, and see things from a parent's perspective.

Given my reading of the literature, I decided to choose the second option, which is to ask stakeholders about their roles, the roles of others and aspects related to distributed /shared leadership and from that find out whether practices of shared leadership exist in schools.

#### **Data Collection Method: Interview**

In this study, interviews were employed as the main tool for gathering information directly from participants in accordance to the purpose of the study, which was to collect rich and in-depth data that would help explore the meaning of shared leadership in detail based on the understanding of the various stakeholder groups involved. Despite the awareness regarding critics' views on utilizing case studies and interviews to investigate a topic, this choice of methodology is in agreement with Locke's (1989) requirements which asserts that the suitability of the research method relies on the purpose or reason of the research and the questions being asked.

Interviews, however, are not easy to conduct properly where researchers need to guard against certain aspects when employing this procedure. For instance, it is crucial to maintain focus on the questions; provide appropriate prompts as needed and uphold awareness of certain bias on the part of the participants (Dunne, 1995). These are important factors to be considered when facilitating study interviews.

The uniqueness of the interviews as a research tool had also been acknowledged since they allow a shift on what is supposed to be a formal scientific relationship between the researcher and the participants to a more social meeting where both engage in a purposeful conversation. According to Hannabuss (1996) this process “has its basis in human conversation and allows the researcher to adjust the pace and style of asking questions”(p.1).

Patton (1990) claims that the aim of interviewing is to uncover what is on peoples' minds. Interviews also provide researchers with valuable insights into certain experiences, motives, opinions, contradictions, attitudes and behaviors (Gay, 1996). Moreover, interviews are the most appropriate research tool to make use of to draw out suitable answers to research questions. In this regard, the interviews would offer profound and detailed knowledge about how the stakeholders perceive their role; their ideas on the areas they expect to be involved in; their discernment on the advantages and disadvantage of their role and their personal understanding of shared leadership and its usefulness to their particular school.

The type of interview to be applied, however, was influenced by the main purpose of the study and the need to be within its context. The aim was to discover how the stakeholders in the case schools understand shared leadership and its perceived relevance to their schools.

Collecting rich information within the time frame was vital to the study. Certain aspects of the research presented some difficulties, particularly in getting stakeholders to impart detailed answers. Encouraging stakeholders to allocate more time for other types of interviews likewise proved to be a challenge as they had other preoccupations like work and/or family commitments. Asking the participants to give more of their time to write their views would be rather unreasonable and inappropriate. Thus, semi-structured interviews seemed to be the best type of interview to be applied for research purposes.

Since the goal of the study is to gain comprehensive data about the views of all participants, the most suitable type of interview to be employed had to be weighed in order to obtain relevant data within the proper context. The decision on whether to interview stakeholders individually or in groups or perhaps both, was influenced mainly by what was deemed to be most appropriate for the group being interviewed. (Dreachslin, 1999; Cohen and Manion, 1994) Therefore, using *semi-structured interviews* with *individual interviews* and *focus group interviews* was deemed appropriate and consistent with the aim of the study.

### ***Individual Interviews***

Were conducted with parents, teachers, the head teacher of the Primary School Department and Council members in school “A”. In school “B” individual interviews were conducted with parents, teachers and the owner and the deputy head. This approach was considered suitable for this group because the objective was to find out in-depth details about their personal opinions and interests regarding the topic (Day, 2000). It was important to consider that looking for details that could explain the dynamics of shared leadership and its usefulness to schools is essential. Moreover, this method was likewise regarded as beneficial in anticipation of other further-related issues that influence stakeholders’ involvement and their understanding of shared leadership that has not yet been explored in the literature. Hearing what they like, wish and expect from their role was vital. Therefore, sitting with each stakeholder individually and asking pre-planned questions allowed concentrating on one stakeholder at the time and focused the attention on asking the right prompts that helped in gaining specific information being sought (Dunne, 1995). These respondents may not be considered representative of all stakeholders in both schools but they did provide a broad range of insights to illuminate the questions being addressed in this thesis.

### ***Focus Group Interviews***

Were employed in both schools as a suitable approach with children/students since it allowed peer interactions among all respondents. Furthermore, they promote ideas through probes and pauses compared with other survey techniques (Krueger, 1994)



Interviewing children in groups motivates them to voice their opinions and reveal their views more (Dreachslin, 1999). One disadvantage of focus group interviews with children, however, is that they can take longer than the anticipated time frame. This was taken into consideration during the interview schedule planning in this study.

Tape-recording interviews is useful in research (Dunne, 1995). Doing this allowed me to obtain full detailed answers. I was able to identify groupings of the concepts, to check the wording of any statement that I wanted to quote directly and check the accuracy of my notes. The process functioned as an additional source of evidence. It also helped in analyzing the content of the data, and in spotting any nuances in tone that were lost during that in the interview. Although written approvals were gained from participants in both schools on the use of a tape-recorder prior the interviews so the presence of the equipment should have been expected, it had been noted that the tape recorder disturbed participants, especially children at the beginning because of its novelty. But after some time of adaptation, it became a challenge for more participation. The possibility that participant behavior had been affected to some extent by the perceived expectations of the research and the intrusion of the tape recorder has to be acknowledged.

It was also ensured that there were no distractions in the physical environment in both schools during interviews. Interviewing participants individually encouraged them to voice their opinions freely without fearing that what they say will leak out, so they were more likely to provide correct answers.

The participants in both schools took part freely in the interviews. They viewed their participation as a means to express their views, opinions, concerns and expectations related to their role in school and the role of school leadership.

As a researcher, putting any pressure on the participants to elicit response in any particular way was avoided. They were provided ample time to understand each question although still within the limit of the time allocated for each interview. They were encouraged to talk freely, providing necessary prompts where needed. A positive and

friendly attitude towards participants was adopted and maintained throughout the study, welcoming their opinions, no matter what those may be. An open mind was likewise maintained along with objectivity and honesty in dealing with the participants. No promises or specific assurances were given that would lead them to have false expectations. This had been grounded on the awareness of biases on the part of researcher such as the tendency to seek out answers that support the researcher's preconceived ideas (Borg, 1981). In this regard, cautiousness was observed on the way the questions were laid out and asked.

### ***Development of the Questions***

Most of the interview questions for each sample group in school "A" were generally the same. This was to enable a point of comparison between the views of different stakeholders. Examples include questions on whether they should be involved in school matters and why; how they should be involved; the advantages and disadvantages of their involvement and how a school leader can promote their involvement in school. However, there was a need to ask additional questions to the owner, the deputy head, teachers and parents in school "B". This is because after the first round of collecting evidence from school "A" it became clear that the questions were missing certain important aspects that need to be asked about distributed/shared leadership in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of stakeholders perceptions of leadership. Therefore, there was a need to go back and consult literature on distributed leadership and find out about the main theories that underpin this concept and can help us understand how it works in schools. This process allowed me to formulate additional questions in order to ask them to participants in school "B" that target distributed leadership, especially the questions addressed to the owner, the deputy head and the teachers. An example of a question addressed to the teachers: what can the deputy head do to distribute/share leadership with you? What are the forms that this leadership can take? These questions were different to those in school "A" because they address the concept of distributed leadership more. Whereas, the questions addressed to parents were more related to their understanding of distributed/shared leadership, such as: how do you see school leadership? How can you become part of school leadership? What is your role in it? Accordingly, there was also a

need to go to the original interviews data scripts that were collected from school “A” to look for aspects that are about distributed leadership which the researcher unintentionally overlooked since the focus at the beginning of the study was on stakeholders’ involvement. When the researcher looked at the original scripts from the angle of leadership and not only stakeholders’ involvement, hence, was able to find such data. The interview questions were open-ended in both schools in order to elicit descriptions, explanations and views (MacGilchrist et al., 1995). Similar probes with each stakeholder group were applied. Furthermore, all participants were encouraged to further explain their answers in detail whenever necessary.

Due considerations were taken into account in both schools regarding the meaning of the questions addressed to all participants, terminology used and whether the questions were biased (Dreachslin, 1999). This is because schools can develop specific cultures and terminologies such that what a term means in one school may be different in another. Similar forethought was given on how questions were sequenced, proper wording and the prompts employed throughout the interviews (Dunne, 1995). Questions were created with a mind-frame that the responses for each item could be triangulated across the semi-structured interview schedules to allow comparison with dissimilar views of different stakeholders (MacGilchrist et al., 1995). Establishing rapport with the respondents by keeping the discussion going by posing questions that steer away from yes/no answers was also taken into account (Hannabuss, 1996).

It was noted, however, after the piloting process that there was a recognized need to make certain questions adaptable to each distinctive sample group in school “A”. The questions addressed to the Council members include an additional question about the vision(s) that a school leader should possess as school administrator. Moreover, there is an additional question about the procedures that the Council would take in case a head teacher takes a different decision(s) that may oppose their own (Appendix 4). The questions for the head teacher also included an additional question on identifying stakeholders in a school from her point of view. Another question was also added about specific situations where a head teacher should avoid taking stakeholders’ opinions into account. A further question

was added on the factors that influence a head teacher's decision to involve any stakeholder group in school matters (Appendix 5). These changes were made because I wanted to find out from a leader's point of view her understanding of shared leadership and the people that she considered as part of it.

Interview questions for teachers, however, did not need any similar adaptation (Appendix 6). For parents and children/students interview, on the other hand, the questions did not include supplementary questions (Appendix 7). Nonetheless, the interview questions addressed to children/students were written and simplified to match their cognitive age level (Appendix 8). The same questions were also addressed to the children/students in school "B". The questions addressed to the owner, the deputy head, teachers and parents in school "B" (All in appendix 10) were generally the same in content. The difference was in the terminology used; for example, questions addressed to parents were possibly a little bit simpler to understand than the questions addressed to the owner, the deputy head and the teachers.

The content of the interview questions were modified continually as well as with the way they were asked to each stakeholder group as an ongoing procedure throughout the study in both schools, especially during the piloting process. The modifications were based on participants' feedback regarding the questions. For example, only one set of interview questions to be addressed to all stakeholders was initially developed. It was noted later on, however, that adjustments on the questions were necessary in addressing each group. Questions designed for children, for instance, should be different from those meant to be used with adults like teachers and parents. The number of questions had to be reduced and written in a simple language. The modifications made interview questions clearer and more understandable to stakeholders.

### ***Piloting***

In conducting research, it is common practice and advisable to pilot data-collecting tools to check whether the questions and the instructions are clear so unnecessary data can be removed in the final draft (Bell, 1999). The study questions were piloted randomly only on the questions addressed to participants in school "A", and in two forms:

1. The questions were given to two teachers: one is a current teacher in a public school in Cyprus and the other, a former teacher who worked in UK schools and now lives in Cyprus. A student from Canada who was on holiday in Cyprus was selected as another sample subject. A Council member working in a private college in Geneva visiting Cyprus and a parent who has a child studying in a private school in Cyprus were pre-screened for similar purpose (Refer to Appendix 9 for the summary of the questions and the participants' responses). The concept of giving out questionnaires although only interviews were to be employed later on in the actual study was basically for the purpose of testing the interview questions on incongruent individuals and to see what kind of responses would be achieved. The primary concerns were on the clarity and comprehensibility of the questions; if further modifications were necessary; whether the questionnaires were too long or repetitive. Having people answer the questionnaires during their free time and taking note of the time it took each respondent to complete the questionnaires gave a general idea on the approximate time the interview would take. Hence, this was used as reference in drafting the schedule for the actual interviews during the planning stage. Using questionnaires to test the interview questions also helped in refining the questions. Modifications made after the pilot include changes on the order of questions and on the language employed in the questionnaires.
2. I interviewed two parents and two students in the sample school who were exempt from the final sample. This also proved to be useful as a first step prior to conducting the actual interviews due to the following reasons:
  - It served as practice ground for the challenging role of an interviewer.
  - It drew the attention to the time limit because the interview exceeded the anticipated time frame to complete.
  - It helped in establishing limitations on data gathering that should be focused on significant in-depth details about the topic.

- It aided in figuring out ways the questions were asked and how explanations were required.

Suggestions presented by Dunne (1995) regarding carrying out the actual interviews were taken into consideration, such as:

- All interviews, with a few exceptions, were conducted within the school's premises where all interviews were tape-recorded;
- The dates and times of all interview schedules were pre-arranged and confirmed by phone;
- The same procedures were adapted and followed in all interviews. They commence with a brief introduction where a statement of the date and time are included along with the topic of the interview and the participant's identity. All interviews were supposed to end with a question on any other comments, questions or personal opinions that the participant would like to add regarding the interview or the topic;
- The study was conducted and transcribed systematically;
- A positive attitude was maintained throughout the interview schedules to establish a balanced and friendly relationship with all participants; and
- A relationship based on trust was adopted to promote a positive and cooperative atmosphere.

### ***Conducting the Interviews***

Individual interviews were carried out individually and separately with all participants except children in both schools. Most parents preferred to be interviewed early in the morning after leaving their children at school. In the consultation with grades five and six teachers in school "A", four focus group interviews were carried out along with students in the aforementioned grade levels. The first was with four children from grade six and the second was with another three children from the same grade. The third involved five children from grade five while the fourth was comprised of another five children from the same grade. Two focus group interviews were carried out in school "B": one with five children from grade five while the other six were from grade six.

### ***Ethical Considerations and Dilemmas:***

As a researcher, obtaining valid answers from participants is vital; especially since analyzing the concepts that interplay shared leadership depend on the accuracy of the responses of the participants. The findings of the study will be based on the trustworthiness and reliability of these answers. In order to maximize the chances of obtaining honest answers, I undertook certain steps/measures in both schools. For instance, I ensured that participants understood each question accurately; this was seen as a first step towards getting genuine answers. This was done by briefing the participants prior to the interview schedules and explaining the meanings of the questions - why they are asked and what they aim to find out; and asking follow-up questions to check their understanding. The clarity of the questions addressed to participants in school “A” was double-checked with prospective participants through the piloting process. This allowed me to make certain adjustments; responding constantly to their concerns regarding the questions or the study.

Permissions to facilitate the study were forwarded to and obtained from the school director in school “A” and the deputy head in school “B” via e-mail correspondence and/or by telephone. Similar courtesy was given to grades five and six teachers and parents where permissions to conduct in-group interviews with the children were requested and obtained and letters of thanks were forwarded to parents who permitted their children to participate (see Appendix 3). Children were informed about the study and their role in it and they were invited to take part in it. All stakeholders were informed about the study, the work entailed and their role in it. Moreover, questions were encouraged and all their concerns were addressed accordingly.

Issues of confidentiality were a major concern and were highly emphasized at all stages of the research in both schools. Effort had been exerted to provide the needed assurance

to all participants that upon the conclusion of the research, all findings would be reported only in anonymous form.

From the start, respondents were informed about my work, the purpose, the reasons why they need to be involved in the study, the benefits of their participation, and the interview schedules, to name a few. All stakeholders in school “A”, except the Council members, had positions related to their role and school in general that they were not happy about. They were informed that by taking part in the interviews they would have the opportunity to voice their opinions and ideas regarding their role in school and that their views, appropriately anonymised and generalized would be presented for the school administration to address. Participants in school “B” thought that voicing their views and concerns would be beneficial and needed in order to make the school’s Learning Center successful.

In school “A”, the head teacher for example, showed particular interest in the opinions of teachers and parents. She considered teachers as her partners and she understood their important role in teaching children. Finding out about what they think regarding their role and school leadership was significant for her. Being given insight on parents’ opinions is significant since they are the ones paying for their children’s education. Responding to their concerns and keeping them happy are important for her.

Parents, on the other hand, were also interested to inform the head teacher about their true opinions regarding their role since they felt that they have the right to be heard and their concerns responded to. The children were very excited about the interview as they saw it as one way to take them away from the classrooms. They also viewed it as a means to voice out what is on their minds regarding their role and certain aspects in school that they would like to be changed. Sitting with them in small groups of four to five at a time and carrying out casual conversations encouraged them to say their minds freely. Sometimes, as where necessary, additional questions were asked to ensure that they understand the questions accurately. They were interested and keen on letting the head teacher know about their opinions. Many of the things they said, however, were deemed



quite irrelevant to the study. Although all participants were assured that their identities would remain anonymous and their opinions would be presented to the school administration as a group and not as individuals, as a researcher this created an ethical dilemma for me and I was put in a difficult position. I had to make a decision and I thought possibly telling the head teacher about parents concerns would be helpful for both parties and will probably improve relationships and school functions. Stakeholders' names were not disclosed (confidentiality) and their views disguised so that they could not be identified in any other way.

### **Framework for Analysis**

In analyzing the data, identified themes were integrated into an analysis based on Spillane et al.'s (2001) theory of distributed leadership which represents an analytic/descriptive way to understand distributed leadership in school. The theory incorporates concepts from distributed cognition and activity theory to emphasize the importance of the social context for intelligent activity. The theory stresses the importance of seeing school leadership as extended to include schools' social and situational contexts. His four core ideas that the theory is based on served as 'the four conditions of analysis of the development of influence' that are necessary to understanding distributed leadership and how it works in school. First, leadership tasks and functions were looked into in order to identify the specific activities and tasks that school leaders engage in and on the nature of the tasks, whether micro or macro, that leaders employ in order to organize their practice. Second, task enactment was considered in order to see how school leaders carry out these tasks, how they perform, describe and present these micro tasks in school and their relation to instructional change. Third, social distribution of task enactment was taken into account in order to find out how leaders interact with other people in school during this process. Fourth, situational distribution of task enactment, was taken into account because the nature of the activity and the school itself influence who will take responsibility to lead and manage the school.

However, a limitation of the study is that while Spillane et al. (2001) provide us with a heuristic guide that incorporates both leadership roles and tasks, I am looking mainly at the leadership roles that leaders play in their schools and their reporting of the way tasks are distributed.

Based on the four previous conditions, leaders play a significant role when it comes to understanding how leadership is distributed among stakeholders in school. The result is leadership that may be stretched over many people in school. Finding out how stakeholders see their role in school and the role of others and their expectations from their role will allow us to find out how they understand distributed/shared leadership. With these in mind, similarities in interview data in the two case schools were examined, which allowed data to be classified under particular issues. Certain main concepts were identified as shared to a great extent among stakeholders, which were then classified under four major sets:

- The activities and tasks that leaders and other stakeholders report they undertake in school;
- The way leaders interact with other people in the process;
- Concepts that may explain the extent of shared leadership or facilitate its application. (Power-control, delegation, empowerment, trust, communication); and
- Concepts that are considered constraints or barriers to applying shared leadership (accountability, support, time and life circumstances).

What this analysis enabled me to do was to triangulate the views of stakeholders within the two schools to see where there were differences in perception between the groups as well as enabling a comparison between the schools. Where there were differences in the views of groups of stakeholders within a school, then various explanations could be advanced. However one of them may be on the basis of a comparison between the processes and cultures of the two schools. These data and this form of analysis then enabled the possibility at the individual, group and school levels.

There are different types and purposes of triangulation. For example, there is triangulation between methods, triangulation within methods, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation and data triangulation. It can be used to view a topic, from more than one viewpoint. This is in order to get a better knowledge of it (Denscombe, 2007). Triangulation in this study is data triangulation, where the researcher compares data from different informants and schools. It is a way to uncover where there might be distinct differences in the views of different stakeholders groups, which then need to be explained in terms of the way leadership, is carried out. The analysis was conducted on the three levels: the individuals, the groups and the schools. Analyzing the third level will show whether there are significant differences between the two schools and why.

The main source of data had been the tape recording of the interviews as well as notes taken occasionally during the exchange. The data were then analyzed based on the following suggested major stages (Cohen and Manion, 1994; Dunne, 1995):

- Tapes from the interviews were listened to, transcribed on the computer, and notes were reviewed the soonest possible time after the interviews;
- Data were organized and classified into five sections that correspond to the five stakeholders groups in the case schools;
- A list was created with regard to issues that emerged from the data and under each stakeholder group;
- Interview tapes were replayed and reviewed once more accompanied by the list of issues previously made and comments noted were re-read;
- There was a re-checked list of issues shared by all stakeholder groups and these were highlighted accordingly;
- Issues and themes were categorized without compromising the originality of the responses provided by the stakeholders. Certain significant quotes were likewise noted. Repetitive review of interview accounts was an on-going practice throughout and even after the process of data analysis; and
- Themes were aptly labeled as necessary (e.g. power-control was labeled under the issues that underpin shared leadership).

The foregoing method organized how the data were obtained and analyzed. It allowed attention to be directed on certain significant aspects regarding shared leadership and stakeholders' role. It helped in identifying similarities in data that are shared by all stakeholders. Through this method, double-checking data for accuracy was possible and ensured that participants were quoted accurately. It allowed me to pinpoint certain issues regarding shared leadership and to identify the factors/concepts underpinning its application.

The facilitation of these themes were grounded on the hopes that they would:

- Provide better understanding on the topic that is essential to answering the research questions;
- Summarize how stakeholders respond and ascertain significant meaning behind their words; and
- Capture the way stakeholders convey their own beliefs, values and expectations (Cohen and Manion , 1994; Day, 2000).

#### **4. FINDINGS**

The findings are presented in three sections: 1) school “A”, 2) school “B”, and 3) a comparison between the two schools. The findings in sections one and two are presented as per the stakeholder group; beginning with the perceptions of Council members in school “A” and the owner of school “B”, followed by those of the head teacher in school “A” and the deputy head in school “B”, the teachers, the parents and finally, the children/students. Each group has two main subsections: how each group perceives the stakeholders’ role in school and how each group perceives the school leadership.

##### **School “A”**

##### ***Council Members***

##### ***How Council Members Perceived the Stakeholders’ Role***

While there is an overall principal in the school, my focus is on the Primary School Department. The interviews which were carried out with two Council members (one of them was the Chairman), uncovered key factors regarding the way they both see the role of the stakeholders including their own in the school, and the limitations that they put on the role of the other stakeholders, as will be shown in the following extracts:

Council members see the role of the other stakeholders only as helpers; supporting the school as necessary:

Chairman: “We employ the director of the school and the teachers to help.”

Councilor: “With always the help of the director and assistants of the director, in consultation with the educationalists... you need the help of the director or the deputies and the teachers.”

Their relationship with the head teacher and the principal is one perceived as that between employer-employee where the Council states how the school should be run and the school leader follows the rules:

Chairman: “We give instructions that we want the school to be strict, we want uniformity, we want the rules to be obeyed, the principal follows the policy of the Council... he should follow the instructions of the Council.”

They see the role of the head teacher/principal, however, to entail: overseeing the daily operations of the school with the help of other school staff and being on top of all aspects of the school. The principal is also responsible for providing advice to the Council. The head teacher and the principal can attend Council meetings but they don’t partake in decision-making:

Chairman: “With the day-to-day problems, he [principal] should decide; the day-to-day decisions are his job, he should decide, he is responsible, [the] council will take a decision with his consultation...mostly we follow his advice.”

Councilor: “They [principal and head teacher] are not allowed to vote but they take part in council meetings.”

Council members’ relationship with the teachers is primarily as employer-employee. The teacher’s role is to teach the students, take care and help them to achieve good results:

Councilor: “We hire good teachers... we expect them to do a good job, teaching students and help them achieve high grades.”

They perceive the home-school relationship basically as customer service:

Councilor: “[It] is basically a business; you offer a service and you are getting paid for that service. I can’t accept bad teachers because I am not offering the service I am paid to deliver...your child is not getting three A levels. Students are clients; we have to look at them as clients and respect them as clients.”

For both the Chairman and the Councilor parents help the school by supporting their children both at home and in school:

Chairman: “[They] help their children with their homework and engage them in extra curricular activities.”

With the school, however, parents have two main roles: help teachers with activities and raise money for the school:

Councilor: “Reading, math, excursions, or dressing their children before and after PE and swimming.”

Chairman: “They [parents] are all PTA members, they collect money for the school.”

Both the Chairman and the Councilor indicated, whether directly or indirectly, that students’ role is to achieve high grades and to abide by the school’s regulation:

Chairman: “to help students get high grades, the [school] is based on students going to good universities. The law is a law but the school has a law, you must abide by the rules.”

### ***How Council Members Perceived the Leadership of the Council***

Council members see school leadership to be related only to the leader as a person and to the qualities/characteristics of that leader. For them, a leader is someone who is in full control and all powerful: someone who does not share this leadership with any one else in school. They see themselves as the leaders of the school. They are convinced that the overall operation of the school and hence its success or failure primarily rests in their hands. They have virtually full control over what happens in the school. For them, it is their right and responsibility, which they do not believe, should be shared with others. Thus, they generally do not consult with other stakeholders before implementing their decisions and regulations. Although the Council members consult only the principal during the Council meetings, at the end they are the ones that make the decisions:

Chairman: “We [council members] take the decisions...that is for the Council to decide...these are the regulations...we insisted on our decision.”

Thus, they perceive themselves to be fully involved in the school:

Councilor: “We spend a lot of time handling the different policies of the school ... I don’t think I, or any school board member, can get more involved with the school. What we are doing is enough.”

They are clear about the school aspects that they should be involved in:

Chairman: “The Council is involved in how the school is run, not academically. The Council should not be involved in the day-to-day running of the school. We, as the Council, set the policy we want; we deal with the finances for the school; the parents pay fees; [appointing] teachers, the academic part [is] left to the experts: director, deputies, teachers, heads of departments, and heads of years.”

They believe that the way they lead the school yields mostly positive results in many ways:

Chairman: “We get a hundred graduates who are different from the graduates of the other government schools. They have pride in themselves that they graduated from the [school]; most of them come back to serve on the Council. [Council members] create good relationship with the teachers, between themselves [the teachers] and with the rest of the Council; everything [is] running smoothly; better results every year; no terrible increase in the fees; [we] plan ahead for the future.”

There are also personal benefits attached to their role as Council members. Their active involvement allowed them to make educational, personal, and social improvements:

Councilor: “[By] meeting people of a high caliber in education, you improve as a person. I think I have learned a lot.”

As parents, the Council members are aware of the risks involved with their role in the school. The possibility of bringing forth negative consequences is present especially when they make decisions that some teachers do not agree with:

Chairman: “You may make decisions that might not be liked by the teachers; your child is in the school, they will penalize him...we can’t please everybody.”



### ***The Primary School Department: The Head Teacher***

#### ***How the Head Teacher Perceived the Stakeholders' Role***

Those she considers, as stakeholders of any school are the parents, the children, the teachers and the Council/governing body, and all have various interests in mind with different roles to play in the school:

“Parents, children, teachers and whoever runs the school, in our case, the Council...all are involved and have different roles in the running of the school.”

Hence, she feels that there is a need to listen to the opinions of every stakeholder and take these into account when making her decisions:

“You are looking partially at what everyone says and making a decision accordingly.”

According to her, stakeholders' involvement in school is beneficial because it allows her to alter her initial opinions and adjust her decisions accordingly:

“Change what you thought in the beginning because quite often, other people have got better ideas than you, they look at things from different angles, you see a different aspect of the problem.”

She claimed that she has always encouraged anyone who expresses interest in becoming more involved in the school, but they have to want to be involved:

“Anyone who wants to be involved in the school should be encouraged if they are interested... They have to want to, you can't force people, you can only encourage them.”

Nevertheless, she has placed limitations on how they should be involved as well as the extent of their involvement. For example, the Council should be involved in finance and in developing certain school policies but not in educational matters:

“They [council members] should be the ones making the major decisions about finance and some policies in the school, but not educational issues.”

Teachers, for her, play a significant role in school. Their involvement is essential to ensuring the continuous improvements on how the school functions as well as with regard to student learning. Thus, their voice must always be heard:

“[The] staff have to be involved and work as a team, this is one of the most important things... they have interests and things that they want to do, I think that this definitely has to be encouraged.”

With parents, she affirmed that it is good to listen to their opinions but she knows that she could not please them all:

“[I] listen to what they have to say.... parents tend to see things from their own point of view in regard to their child and the class.”

She was cautious, however, as to how far parents should be involved, especially since they would create problems in the school especially for the staff:

“We’ve got to be careful how they [parents] should be involved. They don’t look at the school as a whole, it should be pointed [out] to them that often there are bigger issues and often bigger than their own. They [parents] can dictate to teachers, get involved in educational issues.”

In her opinion, parents’ involvement should be limited to being helpers who provide assistance in running the school but not in educational issues or the day-to-day operations of the school. She was specific about the areas of their involvement:

“They help to run it [school]... they should not be involved in educational issues, it is more on a personal level on how their children are doing in the school and how they are attaining. They help to look after the little ones in excursions, supervision, computers, reading, fund raising. We have few teachers per class, if we have parents involved in the school that would be a great help.”

She believes that the children must be at the center of the school and should be involved in learning-related aspects:

“They [children] are the focal point, [they] should be taught about the school, their role in it and about how the school is run. Children should be involved in the running of the school at their own level...ringing the school bell, selling in the canteen, fundraising and passing messages between teachers.”

Getting the children involved could prove beneficial to their learning and development:

“It teaches them independence; how to work in a bigger group, some aspects of school life should be shared with the children and why things are done and say how to change them ... if you manage to get them involved that would help, it is good for them.”

She admitted, however, that this could be rather tiresome:

“Children tend to be self-centered, [and] in order to involve children you’ve got to be there, the point of involving them is to make things a little bit easier for the staff, but in a way they make it more difficult.”

***How the Head Teacher Perceived the School’s Leadership (Council, Head Teacher, Teachers)***

The head teacher sees herself as the leader of the Primary School Department and is responsible for the school while accountable to the Council. She has been working with most of the teachers for many years and she regards them as partners. She claims that she shares leadership only with them, and that she should run the school, make decisions and develop certain school policies together with them:

“We work together...we are a team... the teachers and the head teacher should run the school... they should make policies... the day-to-day running of the school has to be made by the head teacher and the staff obviously.”

She keeps them informed about school matters and she is keen on always taking their opinions into account and consults them because she believes it is a significant factor in creating good working conditions:

“They [teachers] need to know about what is happening in the school... must take into consideration the opinion of the staff...for example, accepting a certain child in their classroom...because if you don’t, you are going to have a very unhappy staff.”

Although she claimed that teachers know their role in the school; teaching the children, she also delegates duties to them:

“They [teachers] know what they have to do...they teach the children. Delegating things to people so [that] they have responsibilities.”

She encourages them to be in charge and organize activities inside and outside school including running their classes the way they see fit:

“Organize activities, excursions, library, ordering books. They [are] free to organize their classes, activities and to plan things, a project.”

At the same time she holds them accountable for their decisions and actions:

“They [teachers] are responsible...if something goes wrong, I just sit down and discuss the matter individually with the teacher.”

And she maintains her right to make the final decision:

“[The] decision usually comes down to the head teacher in most circumstances... normally the head teacher makes the decisions.”

A significant part of her role as a leader is to listen to everyone’s opinion and to support the school and its members:

“You have to take everyone’s opinion whether you agree with it or not. Give time to anyone, whether it’s staff, parents, children whenever needed, to support the school in any way possible.”

She views the Council members as her employers since they are the main authority figures in the school who make important decisions and they have the ultimate power:

“Decisions usually go to the Council, they have to be ratified by them; they have to be listened to because they have the last say... they are the people that ultimately make the decisions... their input is very important.”

Given that she is not regularly present during Council meetings, she admitted that her actual relationship with Council members is quite limited:

“[I] usually don’t attend the meetings, I get to know what is happening through the principal, everything goes through him.”

### ***Teachers***

#### ***How Teachers Perceived the Stakeholders’ Role***

Although during the interview schedules, the nine teachers were asked the same questions regarding how they see the role of the stakeholders, there were significant variances in responses amongst them. It was understood that they had a general broad understanding about the basic role of each group, for example the role of the head teacher is to run the school effectively, but there were also some variations amongst them about the other functions of the head teacher. Each teacher expressed what she saw as significant from her point of view regarding the role of the head teacher, based on her experience and relationship with the head teacher, as shown in the following extracts:

Teachers indicated, directly or indirectly, that the Council should only be involved in school finances and in developing particular school policies. They would rather not have the Council interfere in educational matters or in the school’s day-to-day administration. But it was noticed that only teachers who worked for many years expressed that. For example, teacher 6 said that “the Council should not be involved in daily matters, just finances and some policies.”

All teachers indicated, directly or indirectly, that the role of the head teacher is to run the school effectively. For example, teacher 2 explains what the head teacher needs to do in order to do that:

“Well, for the school to run as best it can which entails the teachers work load, making sure that messages come to you and messages gone from you going to the head, everybody follows the rules, having time to see teachers and see the children as well, and not too busy with administrative work.”

While teacher 4 sees her job to entail handling all educational issues:

“[The] rules, the syllabus and curriculum, subject areas, assessments and how to record this kind of assessment.”

Teacher 5 sees that the most significant role of the head teacher is to maintain high academic standards and keep the school’s ethos intact:

“[The] mission and the ethos of the school, whatever that is, what ever they define it, they should be able to keep the high standards of the school.”

Whereas, teacher 3 thinks that she has to be able to work with the higher hierarchy in the school:

“Work with the higher hierarchy, with the Council and with the head master of the senior school.”

A significant part of the head teacher’s job is to guide and support the staff whenever they need it; a newly appointed teacher stated this openly:

Teacher 7: “[Must] be able to lead the staff, supporting [the] staff. If I have got a problem I like the head teacher to help and support me...supporting staff should be on top of the head’s list.”

Teacher 1 who is experienced said that the head teacher role is to listen to teachers’ opinions and have a good relationship with them:

“[It] is important for the head teacher to [listen] to their staff and their opinions and their feelings about what is going on in the school; have a good relationship; [have a good] understanding of our problems.”

Part of her role is to solve conflicts within the school whether it is related to staff, parents or children:

Teacher 1: “[With staff] have the responsibility for the conflict, with fairness and kindness with discipline make them see the situation in a different way and engage with the staff individually. With children, she has to practice certain regulations. With parents talk to them and deal with the situations as they come, not causing more conflict.”

Moreover, she is responsible for enforcing order and discipline in the school:

Teacher 4: “She should be able to enforce discipline especially with regard to the children.”

The teachers acknowledged the important role of parents with regard to their children; to support their children both at home and in school. By default, they are involved in their children’s learning; especially when the children are still in primary school. So it is important that the head teacher listens to parents’ voice, especially since the school is counting on their help due to the low teacher-student ratio:

Teacher 4: “Parents should have a say in how the system is run, they should be heard, and they know their children best, we need their help, we must listen to the parents’ point of view.”

This is especially true with problems or issues that are directly related to their children. In such cases, the teachers should invite the parents to the school for a dialogue:

Teacher 5: “If there is an issue with a child then the class teacher should invite parents to come in and discuss the matter with them.”

It was also understood during the interviews that teachers approved whether directly or indirectly that the children need to have at least a limited involvement in the school by offering assistance. However, few teachers claimed openly that the school fails to genuinely involve them, as teacher 3 said:

“We don’t make a big thing out of it, they should be making their own decisions; it needs to be put in the curriculum until they realize how they cooperate to make decisions and take responsibility.”

There is general preference that the teachers want to be involved in areas that are within their interests and are work-related; particularly with regard to teaching:

Teacher 2: “Curriculum aids, recording assessments, what exams they are going to make.”

Teacher 8: “Different organizational things within the school, any changes that are going to be made, get things organized, matters of discipline, certain rules to be set up.”

Teacher 5: “Library sorting out books; in math; organizing books for literacy; sorting out the in-service math resource; organizing seminars; seeing book reps.; working with dyslexia; children with special needs.”

Teacher 6: “School functions, outings, [and] plays.”

### ***How Teachers Perceived the Outcomes of their Role***

It was noticed during the interviews that the teachers believed that their role in school results in mainly positive consequences not only for the school but for themselves and the children as well. Excluding teacher 4, each stressed openly what she sees as the most significant. For example teacher 2 said that it ensures the smooth running of school operations:

“School is run better, makes things easier... discuss things, reach a decision, how to organize classes, who will teach what, curriculum.”

Their role in school creates positive learning environment and stronger relationships within the school:

Teacher 2: “More ideas; it’s not boring; very cooperative environment; children feel better; you have better relations with the children; [you] find out a bit about what the children are interested in.”

Their involvement allows them to make improvements within the school, for example, teacher 5 said:

“I give something to the school to enrich the syllabus, curriculum and environment, activities for the school children.”



And promotes better working environment:

Teacher 3: “You can follow through on things, teachers are happy and enthusiastic, concerned about changing things for the better.”

Teacher 6: “[You] do it [to be involved] for your professional development, [and] for your personal satisfaction; [their involvement] allows investigating different things over the years, changing ways of doing certain subjects.”

Beyond the school, their contribution allows them to play a significant part in promoting the school’s relationship with the community, which has a positive influence on their work, as stated by teacher 5:

“[Teachers’ involvement] promotes a better picture for the general public.”

Additionally, being involved in the school allows teachers to think and evaluate aspects related to their role such as how much time and effort they are consuming by being involved:

Teacher 3: “Appreciate what is involved in everything, how much time you spend, how much effort is involved.”

Moreover, being involved means that they are consulted and their opinions are taken into account by school leadership. This in turn will make them feel that their opinions are valued, thus, more motivated to be involved in the school:

Teacher 6: “[You] feel your input is valued, [you] feel more positive... gives me more energy.”

Teachers 1 +7 +8 +9 indicated that their involvement has a positive impact on children’s learning. This is because when they are consulted and their opinions are taken into consideration they feel good about themselves and their role, hence; provide better teaching in the classrooms.

Their involvements help students to learn about how to be part of a team and work together:

Teacher 1: “Students can learn from seeing us having a good relationship with each other, they can see that we work together, they can see how we share things.”

It allows them to understand the students better by being involved with them in activities such as excursions:

Teacher 8: “[The] children will see you in a different environment, your relationship can become closer, you can see the children in a more relaxed atmosphere, [and] you get to know them better.”

Although they strongly believe in the significance of their role in the school, they still think that their involvement would be rather limited:

Teacher 7: “It is impossible to be involved in everything; everybody has to be involved in certain things because it is relevant to them. There is a time limit as to how much you can be involved. How much time you have available and your personal life, [and] how interested you are in different things.”

Being more involved may be perceived as going beyond their work as teachers:

Teacher 9: “If there were too much involvement, I would be taking over her [the head teacher] job. We should have a say; we don’t want to take over.”

Some teachers did not have enough time to be more involved in the school, as teacher 7 said:

“I don’t want to have meetings with [the head teacher] every day after school, I don’t want to spend all my evenings doing marking and lesson plans and preparing things for the next day.”

Other teachers do not wish to be consulted about everything. They believe that the head teacher should know when to confer with them and when not to. They prefer to be

consulted about certain issues such as impending change or major problems, while the head teacher should be able to take care of small matters:

Teacher 3: “It depends on how important the issue is, simple things, the head should make without consulting us, it is only things that need to be changed; [or] when there are problems and we need meetings to change something.”

The teachers acknowledged, however, that their involvement also has a downside. For instance, it can be both time-consuming and tiresome:

Teacher 1: “Certainly wore me out, I’m tired; it takes much of your time because you have a lot of decisions and organization and things to do.”

### ***How Teachers Perceived the School’s Leadership (Council, Head Teacher, Teachers)***

It was understood during the interviews that the teachers perceived themselves as part of school leadership together with the head teacher and Council members. For example, this is what some of them replied when asked about whether they should be involved in school matters and why:

Teacher 6: “I am involved in the running of the school in every aspect, students, curriculum, rules, policies, weak students, nothing we should not be consulted about.”

Teacher 2: “Teachers, yes, definitely, because it involves us teachers...its teachers that are responsible for teaching the children.”

Teacher 5: “It is the teachers [who] are going to be involved with carrying out the curriculum, extra activities... [it] should be the teachers who are involved in the school.”

The teachers see Council members as the real leaders of the school since they have unlimited power and authority and they make all the decisions about school’s aspects, as this experienced teacher said:

Teacher 7: “Everything is decided over there [council]...they [council members] make all the decisions.”

Although the teachers feel that they are part of the school leadership, they feel that they share leadership only with the head teacher and not with the Council. So for them,

whatever leadership is shared it is between them and the head teacher and only to a certain extent, because she maintains her right to make the final decisions. It is the head teacher that consults them, delegates duties to them, shares power and decisions with them and holds them accountable, and not the Council members. Only teachers 2 and 6 (very experienced) stated explicitly that Council members make all the decisions without consulting them, even about aspects that are directly related to their work. Possibly because they have been working in the school for many years (more than twenty years at the time of the interviews), and they might have experienced what they claimed themselves at some stage during their many years of work in the school, as shown in the following extracts:

Teacher 2: “Decisions [in the council] are made without consulting us.”

Teacher 6: “It [running the school] comes from the council, it decides how many minutes we shall teach and how long the school day is.”

For them, sharing of leadership means being able to decide about school matters:

Teacher 2: “...There are decisions that need to be discussed, you are directly involved in everything.”

Teacher 1: “[Teacher] decide how to organize [her] class activities, excursions, we decide about which books for the library.”

Teacher 3: “The class teacher [is] responsible for meeting the parents and solving the problem with them, its her responsibility.”

The head teacher shares school responsibilities with them and encourages them to decide about school aspects, such as organizational ones:

Teacher 1: “Organizational things in the school, for example, teachers made themselves a math’s resource cupboard and they themselves organized everything. The same for the library; teachers took responsibilities. In reading departments we arranged so that parents can help. We have teachers’ representatives in the union.”

They also decide about enforcing certain rules in the school:

Teacher 1: “Before school started a lot of running was being carried out in the school and the children would start sweating and being wild, so I managed to get this to stop and provided a rule that there should be no running in the school.”

They initiate their own projects and in different areas:

Teacher 5: “[I] started place as curriculum coordinator for the last two years, we organized people to come for literacy, the library, maths, also [I work] with dyslexic children, ordering books, fire works nights.”

Teacher 7: “[We] started a committee how to improve the school.”

And they lead their own classrooms without interference from the head teacher:

Teacher 2: “ ...[Head teacher] not checking on you.”

Teacher 6: “Class teachers has first to deal with the issue or problem [related to a child]...sometimes the head teacher might make a final decision but this depends on what the class teacher will say.”

Teachers indicated that they have an open relationship with the head teacher where they discuss school matters with her and she listens to their opinions:

Teacher 1: “We say what we want.”

Teacher 2: “[She] listens to what I have to say, accept your idea, if not say why.”

Teacher 3: “We discuss everything in staff meetings, we say what we think, what we don’t agree on, we say our opinion.”

Teacher 6: “[She] listens to everyone’s opinion, you need an open discussion where you listen to other people what they say, it has to be on the open, to listen to all staff’s opinions...we discuss things between us informally.”

She similarly keeps teachers informed about and involved in what happens in the school:

Teacher 5: “ We have meetings every month, emergency meetings, and during recess. If it is inveterate thing she might discuss it with us. If it is important she will say can I stay after school or call us at home, an emergency thing to discuss. If it is something that concerns the whole staff then she will call for an emergency meeting.”

Teacher 4: “If something is wrong, we will know.”

Likewise she works with staff cooperatively and as a team:

Teacher 7: “[The] school really should work together, relationships, you know, are important as well...you [are] working together so you have to work cooperatively... we have to cooperate; things can’t just be given to you... We have been working together for so long, almost like a family, the head teacher works among the staff.”

There is a mutual understanding and good communication between the head teacher and them:

Teacher 2: “[It is] positive to have an understanding between the head and the teachers...you have to work together...should keep every one informed about what is happening in school.”

Teacher 7: “We keep in touch, everything should be passed among all staff and every one should have the same time to think about [issues]”

Teacher 8: “ Communication is important.”

The head teacher makes the decisions about school matters with the teachers:

Teacher 1: “We discuss every thing, ...we are in the decision-making process a lot.”

Nonetheless, she is the one who makes the final decisions in the school and within her scope of responsibility.”

Teacher 8: “The head must make the final decisions... the head is on top of the staff...we are guided by her.”

Teacher 1: “If it is a personal matter, things like entrance exams, she does not really consult us.”

She delegates duties and responsibilities to them:

Teacher 3: “Delegating, that is very important, being able to delegate and pass on jobs and responsibilities and work.”

Teacher 1: “Delegating things to people so that they have responsibilities, she knows who is good in what ever.”

And assigns them tasks and responsibilities:

Teacher 1: “[If] I know about a certain thing, she would come to me and ask what I think, if I can help I will.”

## ***Parents***

### ***How Parents Perceived the Stakeholders’ Role***

Generally, the parents were not particularly sure about the specific role of the Council. Some, for example parent 7, guess that it could be to manage finances and school’s policies. While some, for example parent 6 expect the Council to listen to the parents’ views

Their relationship with the Council is basically one that is leaning on mere customer service where they pay for their children’s education and in return, they expect the school to provide their children with the best education:

Parent 14: “All I am interested about is bringing my child here and I want value for my money...in a private school because if I pay money and our money keeps the staff in a job, you expect something in return for your money.”

The parents are confident that the teachers work hard taking care of their children and educating them:

Parent 2: “[Teachers] trained to do the job, they are always prepared. They do a good job with the time they given and the resources they given...very caring.”

Nevertheless, they believe that part of their role is to encourage parents to be actively involved:

Parent 13: “[Teachers] let parents know that they need help, many parents don’t realize that they can help out.”

And to keep them informed about school matters:

Parent 10: “We haven’t been informed about what things they take in school, we need to get information from the school, they need to tell us what is happening.”

The children’s role, on the other hand, is to learn. They need to be treated like adults, in the sense that they need to understand the need to study certain topics:

Parent 10: “The children need to know the theory behind it [studying a topic]”

The parents believed that they should play an active role in the running of the school. Thus, cooperation and teamwork with the school staff is necessary in order to achieve the school’s objectives:

Parent 3: “Parents should be involved, we need the school and they need us, we have to work together.”

This is especially true as the school depends on their help with regard to their children’s proper education:

Parent 13: “If they got rid of all parents helping they would be struggling, certainly you would get more children failing things.”

They also believe that parents should decide about certain school issues:

Parent 17: “Parents should be involved in making decisions about activities, what ever is reasonable for parents to decide.”

Nevertheless, they indicated, directly or indirectly, that it is at the parents’ discretion as to how far they want to be involved in their children’s learning:

Parents 9: “[Being involved] it is a voluntarily thing, if parents don’t want to help then they should not.”

Parents clearly expressed their stand on the areas that they prefer not to be involved in:

Parent 11: “You can’t let parents run the school system or [be involved in] what to teach your child. I don’t think it would really be right that parents had too much say in



children's education unless we are educated ourselves because it is not our job, what do we know?"

They were equally clear regarding the areas that they wished to be involved in, such as supporting special needs of children in the school:

Parent 3: "Helping, children with learning difficulties, dyslexic children."

They are also willing to provide assistance about their professions and expertise:

Parent 10 (A dentist): "I am going to grade three to talk about teeth to them; about my profession and the reason why."

They likewise want to be involved in other non-educational aspects:

Parent 17: "I want to be involved not in what they teach my child, it is the things around this. I would prefer to be more involved in safety at the school, what food to give the children, school trips."

They feel that they would be more actively involved if they were regularly informed about the various topics that their children are studying in school:

Parent 11: "What the children are reading, what they are studying so that you can help them with that. I like to be involved not in a way that is interfering - what they are learning, the topics they [are] covering."

They would be interested about school finances and its future plans:

Parent 16: "I would like to know how money is spent in more detail and what the long term, short term, medium term plans are for the school, any plans to get new equipment, I would like to be informed."

Based on their responses, other areas of interest include: hearing children read, teaching children Math levels, helping children dress before and after swimming, excursions and fund raising.

Expressing their opinions in Parents Teachers Association meetings (PTA) is one way for them to further their involvement in the school. Nonetheless, they claim that the PTA role is mainly to raise funds for the school:

Parent 17: “Since I am a member in PTA, our involvement is to raise money for the benefit of the school to pay for extra excursions, even equipments.”

### ***How Parents Perceived the Outcomes of their Role***

It was understood during the interview that parents perceived their involvement as beneficial for all involved. Their responses, however, depended to a great extent on their experiences and interests. For them, it allows them to voice their opinions about school matters and forward them to the school leader:

Parent 17: “Parents, through the PTA, can offer more thoughts, [the] head master knows our opinions; will know that we are aware of things and [we would] make him think.”

Additionally, being involved keeps them informed about what happens in the school:

Parent 15: “[It] connects me with the school, and I get to know how the school is run, get some ideas about bigger plans, what the strategies of the school are, if the curriculum is the same, where they want to go to, if they want changes, how they cope with that, what recruitment is like, is it a problem, what the teachers’ skills are.”

Through their involvement, they are also able to see how the school really works:

Parent 16: “It is important that parents are involved and have an understanding of how things work because if [parents are] kept out of things, they tend to be less satisfied about how things are running.”

They hope that being actively involved in the school would result in changing certain aspects that they are not happy with:

Parent 17: “If you ask many opinions, you will get better results than if you always follow the system; sometimes the system needs adjustments; the only way to make adjustments is to ask opinions from the outside.”

They claim that their involvement makes them have more confidence on what goes on in the school and promotes a sense of belonging for them:

Parent 11: “As a parent you feel a bit more secure, in control of what is happening.”

Parent 16: “It gives a feeling of belonging with the school; it does help share feelings.”

And it allows them to establish social relationships with the other parents in the school:

Parent 8: “It provides a kind of openness to mixing with the parents and society.”

Parents’ involvement is also advantageous in supporting their children’s learning since they work with the teachers regarding how they can assist their children at home and keeps them informed on the progress of their children in school:

Parent1: “See what the teachers expect and then work with the teachers in what the teachers want, the teachers talk to the children and you can...adopt this method because it works.”

Parent 2: “Getting to know my child’s education, [you] get to know what happens in children’s classes; what your child is doing every day.”

It allows them get an idea of how their children interact socially and to establish closer relationships with the children:

Parent 13: “You get to know the problems before they happen to your child; you get to know your children and their peers.”

Parent 12: “You get friendly with the children, get to know their friends; who the other children are; you gain a much better understanding of the children.”

Generally, offering their help would have a positive impact on the children:

Parent 16: “If [I] am more involved, my child will get a bit more attention and support than children where they [the teachers] don’t know their parents.”

It also allows them to safeguard their children’s interests as they think that schools, in general, tend to think primarily about their own interests:

Parent 17: “Parents should be involved in making decisions about activities because sometimes the school is only thinking about their own system, what to do, what is cheaper, what costs less money, what is less effort.”

With regard to the school, they believe that parents’ involvement helps promote a better understanding between them and the school and keeps communication lines open between the two parties:

Parent 10: “[The] staff [feels] that parents are with them.”

Parent 15: “[It] will improve communication, break down barriers.”

It helps the teachers manage their workload to focus on better performance:

Parent 12: “As the teachers can’t control the whole class, teachers are a little bit more relaxed. I noticed when I used to help out in the classrooms, the more people get involved the less work people [staff] do.”

The parents believe that it helps the school when they are more involved with the children’s education as family background has tremendous influence on the children, especially those who are still in primary schools, they can keep the teachers informed about the specific needs of their children:

Parent 16: “[It is] important for the teachers and the head teacher to know parents because children are a reflection of their parents.”

Parent 17: “...As a parent you know the demands of your child.”

With regard to other stakeholders, the parents claimed to provide support since they feel that they are all working together as a team primarily for the benefit of the school and particularly with regard to the proper education of their children:

Parent 16: “It is good for the children and for the parents and for the teachers that they feel they are supported.”

Despite the benefits they cited, they claim that the extent of their involvement could only be up to a certain degree because it is time consuming, and it could bring forth some negative consequences such as gaining access to inside information on other children:

Parent 11: “You don’t want to be too involved because it is then like a job, it is about time, there isn’t enough time to put input in the school.”

Parent 6: “I don’t think it is right to have parents coming back with comments that this child is not a very good reader or this girl is well ahead ...they get to know the inside information when helping with reading about people’s children.”

There are times, however, that parents’ active involvement may cause negative results:

Parent 8: “Parents might undermine the teachers or disagree with the teacher. Parents involvement can cause a feeling of resentment among teachers.”

Parent 13: “If every parent starts to get involved they will do what suits them.”

This could prove to be unfair for some children.

Parent 12: “Parents in the class would favour their child, that wouldn’t be fair for the children.”

Moreover, some parents do not have the expertise in education; they could inadvertently give the wrong information to children:

Parent 9: “Telling those children something is not right, if you get someone to help and they are not good, it is a circle you don’t know where to go.”

### ***How Parents Perceived the School’s Leadership (Council, Head Teacher)***

The parents perceive Council members as the actual leaders; they have all the power to decide about what happens in school:

Parent 7: “They [council members] want to make their own decisions...they decide about everything.”

And they perceive the head teacher as the leader of her department. She is the leader that parents deal with on a daily basis:

Parent 4: “[The] head teacher is at the head of the school...our contact is with her [head teacher]”

The parents do not see themselves as part of school leadership for certain reasons. For one, they are not part of the decision-making process in the school:

Parent 5: “School has a lot of input from parents, but still... PTA is always involved but whatever decisions they come to are always set back.”

Also, they do not feel that they hold leadership roles:

Parent 17: “In PTA meetings we bring things up but we simply don’t get anywhere. PTA is there to raise money, that’s it.”

According to them, their opinions are not taken into consideration when decisions are made:

Parent 1: “A lot of parents get involved. They talk and talk and nothing else is done.”

As the leader, they expect from the head teacher to have the sole responsibility with regard to decision-making:

Parent 8: “I think that the decisions should be left to the head teacher.”

Parents believe that allowing parents to decide might create problems:

Parent 14: “The minute you give everybody the freedom to decide, there will be a problem. There is the head teacher; her job [is] to get her school going, for the children to get above average marks education-wise and if they don’t, it is somebody to blame. So if we have forty parents messing about, then at the end of the day whom am [I] going to blame, the head teacher or the parents?”

Her main role as the leader is to ensure the smooth running of school operations, budget, curriculum and assessment:

Parent 7: “Ensuring a good running of the school, improving school’s standard, employing good teachers, and allocating responsibilities.”

Parent 9: “[She] should take care of budget, curriculum, assessment.”

Similarly, she is responsible for the safety of the children:

Parent 11: “Head teacher is responsible for the safety of all children and you need to know they are going to be safe.”

She is primarily responsible for providing the best possible education for the children:

Parent 17: “Give kids as much knowledge as possible, doing what is best for the students.”

Parent 16: “I want my children to do well but at the same time I want them to learn about life, to have fun and learn about things, to be able to sing and dance.”

She needs to support the other stakeholders:

Parent 16: “[Supporting] staff, the parents and the students whenever that is needed.”

Her role involves problem solving and managing discipline in school:

Parent 10: “She should listen to all sides when there is a conflict in the school, she has to work like a social worker, and deal with any problem accordingly.”

Parent 3: “Discipline is definitely the one, to be able to discipline the children.”

She should keep parents informed about school matters and to listen to their opinions and take them into account when making her decisions:

Parent 10: “The subjects they are teaching, the head teacher should send out more information to parents.”

Parent 11: “Listening to their [parents] views and taking them into account when making her decisions.”

She needs to encourage parents to become more involved through various means:

Parent 8: “School could say we are expanding in a certain area and we are trying to offer more to the children.”

Parent 12: “A letter can go out to parents at the beginning of the year saying: ‘those who can help can come in please’, let us know.”

Parent 15: “School should ask people if they can help.”

Parent 16: “You have to feel welcomed to become involved.”

And to ensure that there is continuous communication between school and parents by keeping them informed about what happens in the school:

Parent 11: “If they [school] inform us what’s happening, this will help the school, because parents can say what they want, the school gets input. If we know what is happening, we will be more positive to help with their work we can find a way to work together and it [would be] much better.”

### ***Children/Students***

#### ***How Children/Students Perceived the Stakeholders’ Role***

The children, whose age ranged from 10 to 12 years old, are yet to understand the role of the Council as regards the overall operations of the school. It was understood that the children’ views on the role of their teachers is to teach them and to take care of them. They added that part of their role includes allowing the children to speak their minds, especially if there is a problem, as child 2 stated:

“She [teacher] does not ask us what we think and what we want.”

They indicated, directly or indirectly that the role of their parents is to pay for them to go to school and to take care of them. They know that aside from studying their lessons they can be useful in many ways, and being more involved in school makes them feel good:

Child 12: “They [teachers] know we are good students, we can help in everything. We are proud of it, our teachers will be proud of us, our parents will be proud of us, when we help it gives us a nice feeling inside that we help.”



They see their involvement as something rather rewarding in many ways. They get personal benefits, they get to help their head teacher and teachers reduce their workload, hence, reducing their stress:

Child 5: “[If] we help in the library, we get lots of books to read, prizes, we get points.”

Child 11: “She [has] got too much work; she hires people to help her.”

Child 12: “They don’t get a lot of rest at home, we want them to rest; like to help the teachers and do that every day, teachers can count on us if they need help. By helping, we let the teacher rest a bit more.”

Child 14: “I’d like to help them, [because] they get very irritable sometimes and they end up being really mean.”

They see their involvement as a means to show their appreciation to their teachers for educating them:

Child 12: “They help us out by giving us education we don’t need something in return.”

It is also a way to keep their parents informed about what happens in the school, as a student pointed out:

Child 14: “Sometimes they [parents] are not informed and we have to inform them.”

The students seem quite confident regarding the areas that they want to be involved in. One such area pertains to sharing their opinion and being consulted about certain decisions:

Child 9: “Let the children vote for new changes in the school and in which ways, children should be allowed to vote as well - if they are going to build a swimming pool or gymnasium, the votes would count, not just cheat.”

Child 10: “[Head teacher] should ask us what we want to do, she shouldn’t make people. If they want to swim they can swim, if they don’t want to swim, they don’t swim.”

Doing functional things within the school is another way for students to offer their assistance. This involves passing messages among the staff and looking after the younger students and orienting them about school rules:

Child 3: “[Children] getting letters from one teacher to another.”

Child 12: “We can help by telling the younger ones about the rules in the school.”

Other areas where students can extend their help include fundraising activities, library, tuck shop and ringing school bell and also by advertising the school in the community:

Child 11: “I like to have us making posters like about Christmas, advertise about the school, advertising the children’s work, show what they can do.”

Child 6: “Raise money for more excursions...we collect money from families and friends.”

The downside of helping around the school is that things sometimes get out of control or problems beyond their control may arise and they are compelled to take the blame without being given the chance to explain their side, as child 14 said:

(Used to help in the school canteen. A few children spilled some food on the floor and the student helper was blamed for it):

“I can get the blame, be in trouble when helping in the school.”

### ***How Children/Students Perceived the School’s Leadership (Head Teacher)***

For the students, the head teacher is the leader of the school who has the ultimate power to decide. She is in control of everything that happens in the school and the one with the knowledge about all the aspects related to the school:

Child 12: “The head mistress needs to know, now the head teacher is taking care of it [an issue]”

Enforcing discipline has a major influence in the students’ relationship with the head teacher. They see her as the person who has the right to enforce discipline:

Child 14: “Send us to Mrs (name) the second we do something wrong.”

They expect her to treat them as responsible young adults:

Child 14: “Instead of telling us in front of the whole class [she should] go outside and speak to us privately; talk to us nicely and tell us not to do it again. If it is really bad, give a punishment but make sure that is not like being really mean.”

In their young minds, her role is to run the school that encompasses their education and handling finances:

Child 5: “A head [teacher] should know how to run the school, what to teach, work out school fees, work out how much there is if someone has paid or not.”

They believe that teaching the students directly is not part of her job:

Child 3: “[She] should not really teach people but concentrate on her work.”

For the students, it is also part of the head teacher’s job to take care of the children and ensure that they are happy in the school:

Child 12: “Make sure that children are not taking drugs or anything... there are not any bullies, make sure that there are no people who pick on smaller people. Make sure that children are happy with their lessons.”

To these children, it is the head teacher’s responsibility to help them learn about life:

Child 7: “Telling us a story and telling us what is the meaning of it, teach every child something very special, and teach them how to know people and other things.”

Employing good staff is also part of her tasks as well as solving problems:

Child 12: “Hire good teachers, only qualified teachers, not hire old people.”

Child 13: “Sort out problems.”

## **School “B”**

### ***The Owner***

#### ***How the Owner of the School Perceived the Stakeholders’ Role***

The owner believes that his role as the school leader is to maintain the good standards of the school as well as to make financial profits:

“[It is] important to keep standards high in the society...people should know [that] this is a good school where they can bring their children to...we provide something different than the other schools...this is my school...making profit is definitely important... we spend much time on promoting the school.”

According to him, the main role of the deputy head is to run the school together with the teachers and to make certain decisions:

“She is responsible for day-to-day running of the school with the help of the teachers...they should come to a decision...they are responsible.”

She is also responsible for sorting out any conflicts with the other stakeholders, especially parents:

“I expect her to take care of [problems], [she] needs to be diplomatic with every one, especially parents...[parents] think only about their own children.”

For him, the main role of the teachers is to provide the children with the best possible education:

“They should be good educators and role models for the children, it is their responsibility...[the school] pays good salaries for teachers, we expect them to do their best.”

And he trusts their judgments to make the right decisions about all aspects that relate to their work:

“[Teachers] are free to run their classes as they see fit...I expect them to make good decisions...[they] decide about day-to-day things such as organizing their classrooms, assessments, activities, excursions, sorting out problems with students and parents.”

According to him, the parents’ role entails supporting their children both in school and at home:

“They pay for school fees...sit with their children, help them to do their homework...[attend] school activities, Christmas party, excursions.”

He believes that it is significant that parents cooperate with the school and teachers, especially about the issues that relate directly to their children:

“We need [parents] to cooperate, to work with us, it is important...the school needs their help...they know their children best, we need their input.”

Parents also help staff to decide about certain aspects especially regarding the progress of their children:

“[We] need them to help us make certain decisions ... teachers advise them but sometimes they need to make the decision...if they have a dyslexic child, his learning program, we need to involve them.”

For the owner, the role of the students is to study and follow the rules:

“They [students] need to do their best to study...teachers help them... they have to follow school’s rules.”

### ***How the Owner of the School Perceived the School Leadership (Owner, Deputy Head, Teachers)***

The owner sees himself as the actual leader in the school. By position, he has the ultimate power and authority to make all the decisions regarding school matters. He shares leadership with the other stakeholders and sees them as part of this leadership; he listens to their opinions and consults them about school matters. But he maintains his right to make all the decisions that relate to spending and finances in the school:

“Anything that has to do with spending, money, I need to make the decision...there are consultations....we discuss things... buying books, splitting classes, appointing staff, I make the decision, but in consultation with the deputy head and teachers. It is important to listen to their views and to what they think.”

He also keeps in contact with them formally and informally through regular meetings, where they discuss school matters, especially if there is an issue with a parent or a child:

“We are always in contact...we meet whenever that is needed and discuss things and make a decision accordingly.”

He shares his leadership with the deputy head and the teachers by delegating and assigning duties and responsibilities to them. For example, they are responsible for coordinating and organizing school matters and activities:

“They [deputy head, teachers] organize activities inside the school, test the children especially children with learning problems, put a learning program, discuss with parents, follow up the progress... order books, library, invite people in.”

They also organize aspects outside the school:

“Excursions, promoting the school image in the society and our special programs such as counselling.”

Teachers are free to run their classrooms as long as they maintain good results:

“They [teachers] are free to decide about what goes on in their classrooms... they plan as they like, I don’t mind as long as they are able to help students get good results.”

In return, he holds them accountable, especially if there is a problem with a child or parents:

“[They] are responsible for teaching the children and providing the best possible education.... definitely they should be accountable... it is their responsibility, they are accountable... sometimes I need to discuss the matter with the deputy head and the class teacher and solve the issue.”

## ***The Deputy Head***

### ***How the Deputy Head Perceived the Stakeholders' Role***

It was understood from the interview that the deputy head believes that stakeholders' involvement, especially teachers and parents, is necessary in order to achieve the school's objectives. This is because they help run the school and promote the learning center. So she believes that without their active involvement and cooperation it will be difficult for the school to achieve its goals:

“[It] would be impossible to run the center without their help, we need to work together, it is significant for the school.”

According to her, the owner is responsible for making decisions about finances and policies and supporting staff in their work:

“[The owner] makes the decisions about spending, policies ...for example, appointing new teachers, curriculum, splitting classes ...[he] needs to be supportive.”

In her opinion, part of the teachers' and parents' role is to help her make school decisions:

“[Teachers and parents] are part of the decision making process in school.”

According to her, parents can also help the school in other areas:

“With what ever they are asked to help with, excursions, fundraising, school activities, helping their children at home with homework and with extra curricular activities.”

She believes, however, that they need to work within the school's rules:

“We have a framework and they can work within school rules.”

For her, students should be encouraged to voice their opinion about school matters through their representatives:

“Each class has its own committee and a leader and they discuss their own problems with the teachers. The president of the committee, if they want something from us, would come and say we want this or to do this, can you help us?”

***How the Deputy Head Perceived the School’s Leadership (Owner, Deputy Head, Teachers, Parents)***

According to the deputy head, leadership means following the regulations and cooperating with the other stakeholders:

“I have to follow the rules of the Ministry of Education and the school and cooperating with my staff, the teachers, and cooperate with the parents and the children - this is leadership for me.”

The deputy sees herself as the leader and the one accountable to the owner of the school. Her role entails running the school operations smoothly, making decisions and promoting school standards:

“At the end [it] is my responsibility to make the right decisions, run the school and keep good standards.”

She claims that teachers are part of this leadership process since:

“They are the ones that teach the children and help with running the school... the school cannot function without them. The leader is only one but you have to enroll all the teachers in making decisions, only the head teacher and the teachers can decide.”

She also includes parents in decision making, especially if this is directly related to their children:

“For example, if there is a child with a behavioral problem, we like to discuss the options and progress with the parents.”

The deputy head claims, however, that she takes into account the opinions of both parents and children when making decisions:



“In order to make them feel that they are an important part of the school, but we don’t leave them to make [final] decisions.”

She keeps teachers informed and consults them about school matters:

“The head teacher always involves teachers and consults them because the teachers have to feel that they can participate in school functions, because if they feel it they do everything and they become motivated.”

She maintains continuous communication between her and them:

“We need to be continuously in contact with teachers and parents, we need their full cooperation to make these programs work and help the children.”

She also delegates duties and responsibilities to teachers and holds them accountable:

“I distribute the responsibilities among them according to their expertise, yes, it depends on the area, and I hold them accountable.”

She assigns them certain tasks:

“If I know a teacher is good at doing something, I would go to her and ask her if she could do [the task].”

Sometimes they ask to be in charge of certain responsibilities:

“[Teacher] come, want to be in charge of something, for example, a trip, science project.”

They are responsible for organizing activities outside the school and:

“Plan and organize how to promote the school in the society, they meet with parents.”

They are in charge of assessing the condition or level of each child and the available options:

“They [teachers] test the child, depending on the case ...[assess] the severity of the case, and make their decision.”

She states:

“The teacher in charge decides the appropriate program, together with specialist teachers, to use with the child, for example, to take a child from the class and how many times a day.”

They are responsible for meeting parents and discussing school matters with them:

“They [teachers] arrange regular meetings with parents, update them about the progress of their children, also listening to what they say...it is the teachers that have most contact with parents and children.”

She ensures that teachers are fully involved by carrying out regular meetings with them:

“We have a meeting every week. We sit down and every meeting has a plan in front of us and we bring one matter at a time.”

She also employs these meetings to solve problems:

“Any time a problem rises we call for a meeting. If something is unexpected ...call for a ten minute meeting and discuss the matter.”

She maintains her right to correct her staff whenever needed:

“If there is a problem ...say this is not done like this, but I do it in a good manner, explain that this ...better to do it in this way and you try to do this.”

The deputy head perceives sharing leadership with teachers as beneficial for both teachers and children:

“It is good to have responsibilities with teachers because they become more motivated and they work better, teach better, have a more positive atmosphere in classrooms... it is beneficial for the children... [teachers] feel better.”

Although she considers teachers as her partners, she acknowledged that sometimes it could be difficult to get teachers to want to share leadership with her:

“You see, teachers are separate persons they have their characters, ok, so you have to know them well, to have a good knowledge about each one’s character and how each one is different and say, for example, that this teacher needs more encouragement, then she can become more involved and help me.”

She believes that it is problematic if teachers don’t want to be part of school leadership:

“This is a problem, this will come up and you try by discussing the matter and make them motivated, you have to sit with this person and explain why you have to do this, why you as a teacher need to help me. Sometimes a teacher might exclude himself or say am out of it, I don’t want to do this. You have to discuss with him and explain that this has to be done according to the rules you can’t do what you want it is better to do it this way, or because of other difficulties.”

### ***Teachers***

#### ***How Teachers Perceived the Stakeholders’ Role***

It was understood during the interviews that teachers were united regarding the basic role of each stakeholder group, but there were differences amongst them regarding the other functions. Teachers expressed their views based on their knowledge and experience. Generally, for them, parents play a significant role in school and they should be encouraged to be involved and give their opinions, as teacher 6 said:

“They [parents] can give their opinion and we have to meet with the parents, definitely, and the parents are welcome to visit the teachers or the head of the departments or the deputy head, hopefully in that order.”

Teacher 1: “[parents’ involvement] is ideal, [I] don’t mind, the parents are very important part.”

Teacher 5, however, was cautious about the extent of parents’ involvement in school:

“Generally in private schools when parents get too involved in school, it is bad news, they feel that because they are paying then that what they say goes. To be honest I am not very much for parents to be part of this leadership, I’m talking now about private schools.

In private schools they feel that because they pay they are part of the group and they are leaders and they will interfere and they seem to think only from their own point of view, they lose the focus that there are other children also.”

They indicated, directly or indirectly, that parents should get involved in school according to the needs of the school and their children:

Teacher 6: “ ...[Involved] in activities, excursions, parties, their children, if there is a problem related to their children.”

According to them, students should play a significant role in school:

Teacher 1: “Yes, I don’t mind, students might tell you something new, new ideas, the leader is part of the team and they work together. Every one could have good ideas.”

Teacher 4: “We actually give our children leadership positions, the privilege of being a prefect... duties around the school, assemblies.”

Teacher 2 explained that the priority of the leader should be the quality of education:

“By the quality of education this means good teaching, good conditions in school and good teachers. Now this unfortunately is connected to the budget and the money. Good teachers will ask for good money, good equipment needs more money. I think at the end of the day the reputation of the school and the results of the school is what counts. Good students and good name and then you can build up a good quality on the way.”

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And also the children, as declared by teacher 1:

“[A leader] someone who goes to the classrooms to see the children when they do the work, someone who devotes time, and someone who is known by the children not a person who sits in his office all the time, doing paper work. The children should know the head teacher...is involved with the school.”

For them, part of the deputy head’s role is to make decisions:

Teacher 2: “It is the role of the head teacher to make final decisions. If we sit down as teachers every week and decide, then why do we need the head teacher ...the head

teacher knows more than a single teacher...the head teacher has to know about the economics of the school, management, sales, budget...it is the head teacher's role to unite any differences between teachers opinions."

***How Teachers Perceived the School's Leadership (Owner, Deputy Head, Teachers)***

The teachers view leadership in relation to both the leader and to the activities of that leader:

Teacher 1: "[It is] about the person, the leader, and the activities of that leader and working together."

Teacher 5: "Definitely both, for a leader to be a leader they need to be diplomatic and tactful when talking to parents and other people in the departments, they need to be organized. I think it is good for them to meet with the other people in their departments and hear their ideas, because the leader does not always have the best ideas."

They perceive leadership as entailing both hierarchy and the sharing of leadership. Teacher 5 felt that maintaining hierarchy and sharing leadership are two systems that should work together. The final decision being made by the head teacher.

Although it was understood during the interviews that teachers see themselves as part of this leadership:

Teacher 4: "Definitely, you have a top management team, then you basically have each department with their own leader who then reports to the higher management"

Teacher 5: "I see it as the responsibility of everybody, and I feel that each department should have a leader who coordinates and directs the people that are under them, and that leader will then join other leaders and have meetings with the principal or the head teacher to ensure that the school is running well."

They still prefer not to be involved in every aspect of the school:

Teacher 6: "I don't want to be involved in everything, only the things that affect my role. We as staff should have nothing to do with finances."

Teacher 3: “No, no, you don’t need to be involved in everything, only classroom management, administration of the classes and subjects.”

Teachers stated certain reasons why they should share school leadership. For example, teacher 5 said that it is difficult for one person to coordinate every thing:

“Yes, it has to be, it is impossible for one person to coordinate every one. Because one person can’t know everything, so it should be people who are knowledgeable about their field, one of those people should be elected as the head or leader, then this leadership needs the leadership from other departments [to] try to sort out the problems that they all have in common, and then together with the principal they can meet and discuss matters.”

Teacher 4 confirmed similar view by saying:

“It is physically impossible for one person to govern the whole school because school ranges from very small like four years old all the way up to eighteen, you know, they need to delegate responsibilities to specialists in each area, and the leader coordinate the different responsibilities, that is how I see a school should be run.”

Teacher 6 declared that it is not right to have one person to decide for the whole school:

“I don’t feel that one person can make a decision for a whole school, how can it be in the best interest of all these children and all the people he is working for.”

They claim that times are changing and so are teachers’ demands. Teacher 4 states that sharing leadership:

“Has not been working before for many years. There is no job satisfaction for the staff. There is no promotion for the staff, people come to work do the job and they go home.”

Teacher 4 goes on to say:

“Today jobs are people’s life... it is inspirational, people want to succeed in their jobs. This kind of system that might have worked a long time ago where people just want money, but now people want more from their jobs. Times have changed.”

Teacher 3 sees voicing their opinions about school matters as one way the deputy head can share leadership. She says:

“That my head teacher asks for my opinion as a teacher and that I am allowed to voice my opinion, and allowed to take part in school activities.”

Another way is to participate in making school decisions with the deputy head:

Teacher 1: “It would be wise and it would be good, because if we work together for the good of our children... she sees the problems and the needs of the children.”

And to exchange ideas with teachers through meetings:

Teacher 6: “I think it is good for them to meet with the people in their departments and hear their ideas and maybe extend on the good ideas because you know the leader does not always have the best ideas all the time, people in the departments especially new younger people come with fresh ideas.”

Teacher 2: “We have weekly meetings and we give our opinion on the subjects and the head teacher decides and gives her opinion.”

And to allow them to be leaders in their classrooms:

Teacher 3: “I am the master in my class that the head teacher allows me to decide in my class. If [a] teacher wants to be a head teacher in her class, you have to allow teachers to do that as long as the teacher knows what to do and not to do and follow the rules, so you allow him to do things his own way as long as he has good results. If not the head teacher has to interfere.”

Moreover, the deputy head needs to provide clear job descriptions for teachers to follow:

“Through clear job descriptions and clear responsibilities and accountability for what you are meant to be doing.” (Teacher 4)

And to work with them as part of a team as:

“[Someone] who is a good people person, who is able to and could work with a management team...work together to get good education and well-behaved children.”(Teacher 4)

The deputy head delegates duties to teachers and the power to carry them out, as teacher 4 says:

“If a school is small with no head of department, then you should have senior teachers who are responsible for certain areas who could act, so you could have subject coordinators someone who could be responsible for each department. So even if you don’t have a big school, you can still delegate responsibilities and share the actual responsibility of the school with senior teachers or people who are specialists in these areas. Using your employees to the best of their ability rather than giving all that power to one person.”

The same teacher went on further to explain how it is done in the school:

“Let me show you, this is [drawing on a paper] the head teacher over there, then you have different departments, you have a finance department, you might have a marketing department who will promote the school to the public, the academic department where the teachers come in and it could be split to different subjects or you could do it by year. The administration department and the head teacher or principal oversees it. And you have a manager for each of these departments who would report back to the head teacher.”

She assigns them duties and responsibilities:

Teacher 4: “From my experience in this school you don’t have to ask for it. I think the head teacher should put it out on the table and say: ‘right I need someone to do this, who wants to do it?’ And let the people apply for that position and then [she] picks up the best one for that job, because a lot of people don’t know that there is a role they could play so they miss the opportunity.”



She also gets information from teachers about their interests and what they like to be in charge of and then she assigns them the duties, as teacher 5 outlined:

“Basically, once we have organized our academic calendar, different teachers are given different roles and different responsibilities, it can be delegated. If the teachers are not happy about doing something, it will not be enforced. So the first thing is to get input from teachers, then they are given what they want eventually. It is not like it is only delegated or assumed, it is a mixture, you know, sometimes teachers can have responsibility and they are trained to do that, others are not trained to do that. If they don’t feel comfortable at first then they share it with someone and are encouraged to do it next year.”

Sometimes she informs teachers about available activities and let them decide whether they want to be in charge of these:

Teacher 2: “I think it is the job of the leader to lay out the structure and make every body aware of this structure and how it works and if there are any vacancies in that structure then to apply for it directly and go through the proper channels.”

Teacher 6: “[The deputy head] allows me to organize certain activities in the school without her interfering.”

Other times, teachers ask to do certain things:

Teacher 4: “You go to the head teacher and tell her: I think am suitable to do this job and then she will say what evidence do you have, then you say I have done this and that, it is like a job interview, if you’ve got the right skills then she needs to consider you, but if she’s got other skilled people applying for this job then she has to pick the best one out.”

And she holds them accountable for what they decide and do:

Teacher 3: “The head teacher still holds them [teachers] accountable for their actions.”

She communicates effectively with the other stakeholders:

Teacher 4: “A leader knows how to create an environment where there are clear communication channels and everybody is communicating.”

Teacher 2: “Someone who can communicate with the parents, I mean has a good relationship with the parents because they [parents] can be defensive sometimes, parents can be unreasonable about certain things. When the head teacher comes and supports the parents when the parents are unreasonable this is bad for the teachers.”

Teacher 3: “The head teacher needs to inform the teachers about the things that are happening in the school, because when they don’t inform them and something goes wrong, they will say but I did not know about it.”

She knows how to handle parents and staff, especially if there is a problem:

Teacher 1: “[She] needs be diplomatic and tactful when she talk to parents and other people in the departments.”

Teacher 2: “[She] has to be objective to listen to both sides, and it is not usually an easy task especially when it is between us teachers and the owner of the school. To try to please both sides, [she’s] got to balance, you know.”

They believe it is problematic if teachers don’t agree, as it stands in the way of sharing leadership:

Teacher 3: “When teachers have quarrels between them...sometimes we have class A and there are four teachers to that class, sometimes they can’t work together.”

Teacher4: “Sometimes staff don’t want to be in the management team, they say we don’t want to have this responsibility.”

Teacher 6: “If you are very good at working with a lot of people and not very good in communicating and sharing ideas, then this system [sharing leadership] is not going to work at all. If you are a person who likes to have power and likes to have complete control, this is not going to work because sharing leadership is also about sharing power.”

Moreover, they think that it is useful to take advantage of the experiences and knowledge of all teachers because as these teachers explained:

Teacher 5: “Different people are knowledgeable in different fields that is why we need shared leadership because I can be a good leader and be able to talk diplomatically to

parents and be able to get my department to do things well, but it does not mean I have all the up to date knowledge about effective learning.”

Teacher 6: “We are all different: we all have different ideas and different opinions. We put them together in an organized way and we have effective leadership that takes on board all these suggestions.”

For them, their role promotes better school functions:

Teacher 1: “The school will run better, you become like a family, you work together.”

It also makes the job of the leader easier:

Teacher 5: “One leader can’t ensure that everything is happening properly and effectively, heads of departments all meet to make the job of the principal I believe, much easier. It is logical to have shared leadership in order to make the school run effectively.”

Teacher 4: “First of all, you are using every persons skills to their full potential. Two, you are not overloading the actual management. You show that you trust the staff by giving them responsibilities, respecting them and at the same time the management can get on with more important things that actually hold the school together rather being bulked with administrative duties.”

Sharing leadership has a positive impact on every one and the school:

Teacher 6: “If they are a happy employee who loves their work then they are more confident in the classrooms and can provide better education and make the school a popular business.”

Teacher 2: “Yes, it is very hard to prove that [sharing leadership affects students grades], but surely if your children are happy that means that they are going to be better working in the classrooms which means that it would lead them to have better grades.”

Teacher 4: “Have a happy work force, everybody feels that they are progressing and working to their full potential and challenged by their role...it is the outcome from all this interaction and communication and consultation. That is shared leadership.”

## ***Parents***

### ***How Parents Perceived the Stakeholders' Role***

It was understood from the interviews that parents thought that the role of the owner and the deputy head is basically to run the school and make decisions. They believe that all stakeholders including themselves are part of the school leadership system and have leadership roles to play in school. This was clearly stated by parent 1:

“Everyone in school is part of this leadership and everyone should be involved in school. There are certain things that only the principal can do but when we are in the matter of functional things about the school... you have to engage the other teachers like a democracy, and the parents and students too, because they take part in the activities of the school. [You] want them to help you so you enroll them in the activities in the school and let them know what is happening in the school and what you want them to do in the school to help.”

They stressed the important role of involving teachers by saying:

Parent 2: “[Teachers] have most contact with the children, so they definitely have to be leaders, it has got to be like joint work.”

According to the parents, the role of the deputy head and the teachers is to run the school and make decisions. (For example parent 5)

They consider that part of their role is to voice their opinion and cooperate with staff:

Parent 6: “If there is something that parents and teachers feel is wrong they should go to the administration and voice their opinion. Teachers should be given options to decide about certain areas like when a kid is violent or have a problem to learn. I don’t think it should be left to the teachers alone to deal with it; it should be a joint effort.”

Parents prefer to engage in areas that are centered on their children, for example, parent 1 said:

“[It] depends on the progress of my child. If my child is a very good child and does not need to be supported I will be in the school only when they have certain activities...when they send me a letter and say we have an activity at a certain time, I go in order to help them.”

And they are ready to spare extra time and effort to be involved in school, especially if their child has a learning or behavioral problem, as parent 8 said:

“If there is a problem in one of the classes parents are not happy with, or the progress that has been made, then I think they should be able to talk about it with the administration of the school and the teachers. If my child has a learning problem like dyslexia, I will be more in contact with school, but if my child is weak in lessons, maybe I can cooperate with the teacher to be in the class and listen to what the teacher does so that I can go home and help my child at home the way the teacher does.”

Some parents prefer to join the PTA:

Parent 2: “[I] would definitely want to belong to the PTA, and know their aims and just be as active as possible and involved. I would allocate time, yeah, I would do that, and I don’t think it is good to take from the school time.”

For them it is a way to voice their opinions about school aspects. In fact, parent 3 states:

“Basically, everything that has to do with the students or the school.”

However, it was evident during the interviews that they think that they should not decide about the learning material:

Parent 1: “[Parents] can’t decide things like, for example, what to teach. There is a curriculum and no one can change the curriculum so here the parents are out of it.”

### ***How Parent Perceived the Outcomes of their Role***

Parents acknowledged, directly or indirectly, that their role in school brings forth both positive and negative consequences, for teachers, students and parents:

Positive:

Parent 9: “Teachers want parents to help in certain activities and from the side of the parents they need teachers to guide them how to help their children at home... how to make their children have interest in what they are doing.”

It also promotes better school functions:

Parent 6: “If parents help their children it is like they are helping teachers because children are better if they have help from their parents, they know them more and they behave better.”

Their role helps them to support their children:

Parent 4: “As a parent, I think if I cooperate with teachers, the teachers will tell me what my child needs because I have to know how my child behaves in school, how my child is doing with his work. So I need to visit school during certain days, and we can do that any time by arranging a time with the teacher.”

Similarly, parents’ role helps them to stay informed about aspects related to their children, parent 2 outlined how:

“Well, when the parents know exactly what is happening in school, they are not in the dark. So whatever the child does say or not say, the parents know what is happening. It is good for the children because in this case the parents will be able to help their children. I don’t know how this is in practice but that is how it should be.”

They can also obtain feedback regarding their children and their learning:

Parent 7: “Yes, then they are not in the dark, they are aware of what is going on. When the child comes home they can see the reactions, and that feedback must be good for the child...some parents they don’t know what is going on in the school.”

Their role in school promotes a better school climate:

Parent 5: “Good for the school because the message has to get across, it is like people are free to have their opinions discussed and sorted out... It got to be communications between all the parties and all got to know what is going on.”

Negative:

For parents, their involvement can be negative if they interfere with teaching:

Parent 1: “Some parents can’t understand that they can’t be involved in the teaching part. They want to force their own opinion and they are not allowed. They have to discuss the matter with the teachers or the head mistress and she can tell them that you can do this and that, but can’t force ideas or opinions; it is working together.”

Also, there maybe many opinions and it can be difficult to agree on things:

Parent 3: “Many people with too many ideas, oppositions, then it is difficult, but again the head teacher is the leader, will have to make a decision depending on the situation.”

They see lack of coordination among the stakeholders as something negative:

Parent 11: “I guess you could get problems, somebody who can’t coordinate.”

It is also negative if the head insists on exclusively holding on to power, as parent 10 explained:

“I think it is more likely that the head teacher has to let go of power and give staff responsibility as well and every one does something. The head teacher is a coordinator and organizer. She takes responsibility for certain decisions and the others are also responsible for certain things. I suppose the head teacher has a concept of where the school will go, not autocratic not narrow-minded. [She needs] to listen to all ideas to realize that everybody can make an input, many people get experiences from life and parents can use their experiences in school.”

***How Parents Perceived the Leadership of the Deputy Head***

It was understood from the interviews that the parents thought that a school leader is someone who is responsible for the whole school and its organization. They claimed

however, that school leadership is about the head teacher and the other people in school - not only the leader. (Parent 1)

Therefore, leadership for them is not restricted to one person, the leader, as declared by parent 3:

“[It] could be leadership of parents, leadership of students, leadership of the staff or leadership of all together; they are all leaders and partners.”

Parent 2 explained how she sees leadership by saying:

“[Leadership] is like a big mushroom, because that is what it is, someone at the top who is responsible for all these decisions, and so the information is spread out to everyone so they all know in which direction they are going. So give them jobs and you hold them accountable. It does not mean that everyone makes decisions whether teachers, parents or students, it is more that they are working together. That is how I see it.”

For them, sharing school leadership means cooperation:

Parent 3: “[Sharing leadership] requires cooperation with the school, working together with the school for the best of our children.”

Parent 4: “[Shared leadership] is actually the joint work, everyone gives their opinion to the head teacher.”

A leader’s role is to run school operations and make decisions:

Parent 4: “School leadership is about running the school, I would say that is the most important thing, but under that includes making decisions, that is why they are there and what they are paid for.”

And they maintain that the final decision should be up to the deputy head to make:

Parent 1: “Everyone gives his or her opinion but the final decision is up to the head teacher. Which we [parents] hope will make a decision in view of all the information that comes from her teachers, so the head teacher listens to them but the head teacher is the one that makes the final decision.”



According to parents, this does not mean that parents, teachers and students are exempted from making decisions:

Parent 6: “I see parents, teachers and students making decisions in school. Parents definitely through PTA, yeah, this is the idea of it, but parents should offer their opinion because leadership needs that in order to be good leadership, doesn’t it?”

And all the stakeholders are responsible and are held accountable:

Parent 8: “You [parent] have to give your opinion, the head teacher makes the final decision because parents don’t want to be responsible for making the final decision. But all are responsible even the parents.”

Parent 4: “If things go wrong it is not only the head teacher, you distribute not the blame, you distribute responsibility, it becomes a learning process I think for everybody, you handle one situation and if you handle it well you become more ready to handle other situations and if you make a mess of it you have to rethink you know, nobody has all the answers, you know, we need to realize that we are all learning all the time even the leader.”

Parents believe that the type of leadership that is required nowadays is one that is shared with other stakeholders, because the role of schools has now changed:

Parent 3: “You know schools now are not about learning material. Schools should be about learning to learn... now we have the internet we can get all the information, the role of schools are different now, that is why we need this type of leadership, it is about transmitting values... I think people are beginning to realize its benefits.”

### ***What Leaders Need to Do in Order to Share Leadership***

According to the parents, leaders are the ones that are responsible for initiating sharing of leadership with the other stakeholders, and they need to work as coordinators in order to involve others in leadership:

Parent 3: “I see a leader also as a coordinator, I mean a kind that is a facilitator of a dialogue and obviously they are trying to apply what the Ministry [of Education] is

telling them to do as well. Some decisions have to be made quickly and they can't have a collective decision, but they have to consult others. I think the more participation in everything you get, the more likely you are to get good decisions because you know a group of people knows more than one."

They need to establish and maintain effective communication amongst all stakeholders:

Parent 2: "Communication, there's got to be communication...there's got to be a person like the principal who can communicate and get feedback and give his opinion. This process happens by having communication, when all are working together they bring something good and new to the school."

Parent 5: "There's always got to be good communication. And anyone who disagrees at any time brings those ideas forward and we think of a decision."

And to create and maintain a positive school atmosphere that enhances stakeholders' involvement. Parent 8 states that a leader should be:

"Creating a nice climate and an atmosphere that encourages parents to come in."

Also, allowing parents to voice their opinions:

Parent 3: "[A good leader] is the kind who asks the people to participate and give you input, even if you are the one that has to make the decisions in the end, just be democratic."

They need to delegate duties to other people:

Parent 3: "[There has] got to be a certain amount of delegation for the principal to make and in a careful manner, its got to be delegated. It is not taken."

And to invite parents to do certain activities:

Parent 3: "The head teacher invites every one to take part, fireworks nights, excursions, parties."

Likewise to ensure that all stakeholders participate in school meetings:

Parent 1: “As a parent, there is an election once a year and meetings once a week, parents can visit the school and there they have to decide to cooperate with the school.”

Parent 9: “Every time the committee of the parents is discussing a matter, the head mistress and teachers in the meeting give them advice and she can give them guidelines where they can be involved and where they can’t, according to the rules of the school.”

They need to work with the other stakeholders and consult them about school aspects, as parent 1 said:

“They [staff and parents] need to talk on an ongoing basis, not just once a year but they have to get together more often and assess the situation so the parents feel they are engaged. In most countries the government sets the rules but I think that parents and teachers can set goals within the school and say whether we achieve such goals. She is the leader but she is consulting with everyone and giving feedback about what is going on in school.”

It is important that they listen to everyone’s opinion and are tolerant. As stated by Parent 10: “Show interest in what is going on not just getting the grades.”

It is also essential to obtain consensus between all parties:

Parent 3: “Having consensus, to come to an agreement between all parties about important issues where everybody feels satisfied.”

This can be achieved by establishing dialogue with the stakeholders:

Parent 7: “There has to be an organized form for dialogue, I think, teachers and students, staff, they have to see what is the best way to use the material they have to teach, [to] reflect on the learning of the children in order for the school to be better, there has to be more participation from everyone. That the kids are learning and they are enjoying it, this is the point of the school.”

## ***Children/Students***

### ***How Children/Students Perceived the Stakeholders' Role***

According to the children, the role of their teachers is to teach them and take care of them:

Child 2: "Her [teachers] job is to teach us, to give us good education...need to take care of us."

It was understood during the interviews that they see parents' role as to take care of them and support them both at home and in school:

Child 6: "Every day mum sits with me, helps me do my homework."

The children understand that their role is mainly to study and to get good grades:

Child 3: "We must get high grades otherwise our parents and teachers will not be happy with us...we get into trouble."

Part of their role is to help in school and do functional things:

Child 2: "We can help in school, we like to help in everything."

Child 5: "Ring the school bell, giving out messages, fund raising, the tuck shop, Christmas decorations and parties."

They claim that sometimes they are asked about their opinion regarding what happens in school:

Child 8: "Sometimes my teacher asks for what I think about some stuff like excursions, some books"

Child 9: "What toy to put in the play ground."

It also makes their parents and teachers proud of them:

Child 1: “Parents and teachers are proud of us, that we are doing something good.”

They see their involvement as a way to help their teachers in classrooms:

Child 9: “I help my teacher to tidy up the room, put things in order, hang up pictures, I like to help my teacher when she asks me.”

### ***How Children/Students Perceived the Leadership of the Deputy Head***

It was understood during the interviews that the children see the deputy head as the only leader in the school because they feel that she has all the power to decide about all school aspects, for example, Child 1 said:

“Our deputy knows everything.”

They understand that she is busy running the school and handling finances and see that children are learning:

Child 9: “Her job is to run the school, money, who did not pay, take care of children and making sure that children learn.”

Discipline has a great impact in their relationship with the deputy head, they see her as responsible for enforcing discipline:

Child 3: “We have to follow the rules...if I don’t do what I am told, I am told off.”

### **A Comparison between School “A” and “B”**

In both schools “A” and “B” there seems to be an approach to the questions about stakeholders’ role that was entrenched in the values of the culture of the school. I understand that culture is a complex concept but will use it in the sense summarized by Deal and Kennedy (1983, p. 14) “as the way we do things around here”. The Council members and the head teacher, in school “A”, the owner and the deputy head in school “B” expressed this clearly. The way they did things in relation to stakeholders involvement was characterized by a set of beliefs about stakeholders’ views.

Generally, the findings from school “A” reveal that all stakeholder groups welcome the opportunity to be involved in the administration of the school albeit only up to a certain point. They see their involvement as beneficial for the school, the students and themselves. The head teacher only shares leadership with the teachers. All stakeholders excluding Council members in school “A”, stressed that the final decision is up to the head teacher.

The findings from school “B” reveal that teachers and parents see themselves as part of the school leadership. They are not satisfied with only being involved in the school, they want to share school leadership and make decisions about school matters. Excluding the owner, who preserves his right to make the decisions about finances, the stakeholders said that the final decisions are up to the deputy head to make.

In school “A”, Council members lead according to the old/traditional leadership models. Where they hold the power and do not share it with anyone else. They alone make all the decisions without consulting other stakeholders. Therefore they see the role of the other stakeholders as only helping them achieve schools goals and objectives. This has been clearly conveyed to the principal and head teacher (who shares leadership only with staff in her department). As a result, the principal and the head teacher perceive the role of parents and students only as helpers. This way of viewing the stakeholders’ role is reflected on how parents and students see themselves i.e only as helpers.

Whereas in school “B”, both the owner and the deputy head believe that stakeholders should be part of school leadership. This message from the top has been transmitted to the other stakeholders including the teachers whom they share leadership with, and also to parents. Teachers in turn share leadership totally with the owner and the deputy head and to a great extent with parents. This message has been transmitted to the parents who see themselves as part of school leadership; and they see it as their right to make decisions with the deputy head and the teachers.

Moreover, school “A” ‘is a non-profit organization’ as claimed by the Chairman. They care about keeping the high standard and the reputation of the school in the community.

So profit is not what the school aims for. They are keen on holding on to their position in the Council and have all the power and authority in their hands. Whereas school “B” depends to a great extent on the Learning Center, which it runs. Attracting parents and making profit is a priority. This is constructed in the beliefs of the deputy head about stakeholders’ role. Sharing leadership with stakeholders and keeping them happy and satisfied is crucial for them and for the continuity of the school.

In the next chapter I link these findings to the core concepts that are necessary in any account of shared leadership as articulated in the Literature Review Chapter. Having shown how these concepts are relevant to the two case studies, the research questions will be addressed.

## **5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The chapter discusses the concepts that underline shared leadership in the two case schools and addresses the research questions:

1. How is shared leadership conceptualized in schools?
2. What practices comprise shared leadership?
3. In particular, can questions one and two be usefully analysed through the concepts of Power-Control, Delegation, Empowerment, Trust and communication?
4. In what ways, if any, is shared leadership beneficial for these schools?

### **The Concepts that Underpin Stakeholders Understanding of Leadership Sharing**

#### ***Power-Control***

The study shows that shared leadership is essentially about power sharing. Power-control is one aspect that emerged to be dominant throughout this study as each and every stakeholder group acknowledged its importance. According to MacBeath (2009), sharing power and authority is a crucial factor for distributing leadership.

In school “A”, Council members held on to the power that they have and insist on not sharing it with the other stakeholders. They have the authority to make decisions on every facet of the school, including those that affect the other stakeholders. They employ a top-down model of leadership and are goal-oriented. They believe that their main role is to help students achieve high academic results. They are firm on their stand that their way of leading the school is effective. One reason Council members hold on to power is simply because they see that it works: students obtain high academic grades, parents are satisfied because their children get accepted in good universities, they maintain their prestige and the school preserves its high standards. This top-down model of leadership seems to have some considerable advantages. For one, they have the power and authority to control



expenses. Thus, money is directed more towards other areas that are directly related to student achievement such as: employing knowledgeable and experienced teachers who require higher salaries, buying good equipment, inviting visitors to come to school, improving the school's physical appearance. Moreover, decisions come from one source, Council members, who are united regarding the school's objectives and methods of achieving them. Each stakeholder group carries out certain limited tasks and every one knows what he or she is supposed to do. The stakeholders realize that decisions have to be obeyed otherwise Council members will take the necessary measures. Everything is preplanned and things have been done in the same way for many years; Council members before them have led the school in this way and it has proved successful, as far as they are concerned.

In contrast, in school "B", both the owner and the deputy head share their power with the other stakeholders. They feel that their way of leading the school is the right way to lead and has also proved successful. Although the owner maintains his right to make all the decisions that relate to spending and finances, he and the deputy head encourage teachers to take responsibility. This also applies to the parents but within the rules of the school. This shared model of leadership is seen by the owner as the right model to employ in order to achieve the school's objectives, which are to keep the high standards of the school and make financial profits.

On the one hand, and from the perspective of shared leadership, a head teacher uses power in a positive way because the power and duties are shared with other stakeholders, allowing them to participate in decision-making and the organization is run through collaborative effort. On the other hand, and from the perspective of traditional/formal leadership, a head teacher uses power in a negative way because the power and duties are not shared with other stakeholders. When power is used negatively, other members may respond to a head teacher merely through submission (Yukl, 2001). The latter is how the Council in school "A" uses its power so the other stakeholders are not willing to involve themselves more than necessary. This does not mean that they do not agree with whatever decisions the Council makes; they carry out their tasks in accordance with the

Council's directives albeit without enthusiasm or much effort. For example, the teachers do as much as it is needed in order to teach the children, but they are not motivated to put more effort and time to be more involved in the school or to provide something extra to enrich students' learning. Work for them seems to be largely about the paycheck; therefore, they don't feel committed to the school. While in school "B" both the owner and the deputy head use their power positively because they encourage the other stakeholders to participate in decision-making and share school responsibilities with them, which in turn motivate the other stakeholders, especially teachers to want to become more involved in the school and to be committed.

Generally, head teachers, especially those of primary schools, perceive themselves as powerful within the school. They have the authority to decide over matters and expect the others to act in accordance to their decisions (Southworth, 1997). Nonetheless, the head teacher in school "A" acknowledges that she does not have the power over important issues and that her jurisdiction is limited within her department, which merely constitutes daily administrative decision-making functions.

In contrast, excluding finances, the deputy head in school "B" realizes that she has the power and authority to make the decisions and expects the other stakeholders to act accordingly to her decisions.

Power changes over time as a result of changing conditions and the consequences brought about by people's actions. Nevertheless, head teachers are expected to work with the other stakeholders in achieving organizational goals. A leader gains or loses power based on his or her ability to achieve these goals (Yukl, 2001). In school "A", the Council is held responsible for helping students achieve high grades. This is the main reason parents send their children to this school. As long as the students are attaining top grades, the Council will continuously be deemed successful and effective so people will keep on trusting the organization. The prestige of the school will be maintained and even be enhanced which will further strengthen the Council's power and influence. Otherwise, the Council will lose its influence and public trust once the students' grades and academic standards begin to slip. That is the only time when power will be taken from them. For

now, they believe that allowing the other stakeholders to participate in school matters would threaten their authority and undermine their power.

### ***Delegation***

Sharing/distributing school leadership entails delegating tasks and responsibilities to the other stakeholders together with a degree of power to carry them out (Bennett et al., 2003). Council members in school “A” delegate certain, limited duties to the stakeholders but they do not allocate power along with them. For example, it is the teachers’ duty to teach because they have the knowledge and the expertise to teach and the Council acknowledges the need for these skills and expertise to operate the school. Nevertheless, the teachers do not have the power to decide about important aspects of school policy or practice.

In contrast, the owner and the deputy head in school “B” delegate duties to the other stakeholders together with a degree of power to carry them out.

Yukl (2001) maintains that head teachers need to ensure that the delegated tasks are relevant to team members’ work; with a reasonable level of difficulty that is within their capacity; and which the members can still improve. Moreover, the responsibilities must be clearly defined and requirements are clarified. All these (conditions) are missing in school “A”. However, the head teacher ensures that the delegated and assigned tasks are appropriate to teachers work and that the level of difficulty is within their abilities. For example, the head teacher assigns the responsibility of organizing the library to certain teachers who are interested and updated about new books and who are knowledgeable and experienced in organizing that. While in school “B”, both the owner and the deputy head ensure that the delegated tasks are pertinent to the other stakeholders work and with reasonable difficulty. For example, the deputy head assigns the task of marketing the school’s special programs to the teachers that she knows have good background and experience in this area and have personal skills to negotiate and convince the public to send their children to the school.

### ***Empowerment***

According to MacBeath (2009), empowerment results from engaging in an assigned role in the formal structure of the school. Empowerment, which may be defined as giving someone the power and authority to act, is an important aspect of collaborative leadership. It focuses on how members of an organization perceive the work environment as related to values and needs (Yukl, 2001). For the purpose of this thesis, this aspect is addressed in the context that relates to how the stakeholders feel and its relationship to their perceptions of the role they play in the school. This is a crucial concept that the Council in school “A” overlooks, which affects the other stakeholders. For instance, by not being consulted by the Council about school issues to be decided upon, the other stakeholders feel excluded. They do not feel empowered so they do not feel the need to be more involved. The Council members are the only ones empowered.

Promoting empowerment amongst organization members is in fact useful because it drives individuals to be more committed to their work. Satisfaction borne out of being productive will result in having the willingness to exert more time and effort, which gives more room for further learning and advancement. Unfortunately, the stakeholders in school “A” have not been given the opportunity to experience all these benefits. While in school “B”, all stakeholders feel empowered and feel that they are able to influence school matters. Hence, they feel satisfied and committed, and both the owner and the deputy head encourage stakeholders’ empowerment.

It is important, however, to acknowledge that although shared leadership requires school leaders to empower other stakeholders, there are other factors to be considered when empowering people such as employee’s abilities and traits (Yukl, 2001). The Council in school “A” does not look at these factors to determine if adopting shared leadership may be feasible. But the owner and the deputy head in school “B” take these factors into consideration when they delegate duties to the other stakeholders. For example, the deputy head delegates the task of testing and assessing children’s academic level to specialized teachers in this area who have the knowledge and experience to do that. She

also assigns the task of organizing excursions to certain teachers who are interested in doing that and who have the experience to plan and arrange such activities.

### ***Trust***

In school “A”, trust is limited to those who have some form of professional or technical expertise. Council members share duties with the other stakeholders but only to a limited extent. Nevertheless, these responsibilities are shared not for the purpose of sharing leadership but because these stakeholders have the skills and knowledge necessary for the school’s operations as is the case with the teachers. In this regard, the Council delegates the responsibility of teaching to the staff, as the Council members do not have the qualifications to perform such tasks.

Also, professional knowledge and the expertise are restricted to certain individuals. Council members are mainly accountable for significant school matters as the ones who make decisions. The other stakeholders cannot be held as accountable as their responsibilities are limited to their specific duties. For example, the head teacher is only accountable for the day-to-day decisions she makes in her department aside from being responsible for the staff.

Aside from the teachers, the head teacher is not also willing to share responsibilities with the other stakeholders. For her, the other stakeholders are contributors instead of near equal partners. This view is similar to how the Council regards the head teacher and the staff. The head teacher claims that that the other stakeholders should be involved in the school, but she limits their involvement. She maintains a strong opinion regarding activities that are appropriate for parents and children to be involved in and those that are not. For instance, parents should only be considered as helpers by being teachers’ assistants. The children can serve in the canteen. She believes that she should only make academic decisions and the development of educational-related policies along with the staff.

She consults teachers and takes their opinions into account prior to making final decisions. She delegates and assigns duties and responsibilities to them and holds them

accountable. She also allows them to set up and organize aspects such as: the library, reading and maths pedagogical decisions, and ordering books. She also encourages them to be in charge of certain areas such as children with special needs. They are free to manage their own classrooms without her interfering in their work. Likewise, they are responsible for dealing with parents. They plan and organize extra curricular activities such as arranging for visitors to come in, fireworks nights, and excursions. She does all that by keeping teachers informed about all school aspects. Also by being continuously in contact with them and meeting with them formally and informally.

We can conclude that in school “A”, Council’s leadership is not shared with the other stakeholders because Council members do not trust the stakeholders. This is evident in the way the Council excludes them from being actively involved. The head teacher trusts her staff to make the right decisions and do the right things but, as mentioned earlier, only to a certain point

While in school “B”, trust is observed between the owner, the deputy head and the other stakeholders. Excluding spending and finances, the owner trusts the other stakeholders to make the right decisions, run the school properly and work with him towards achieving the school’s goals. Also, the deputy head trusts her staff to do the right job and to make the right decisions. There does not seem to be any struggle for her to balance trust and accountability. She also trusts parents to make decisions, especially the decisions that are directly related to their children’s progress and learning but to a certain extent. She trusts the children to carry out the assigned tasks successfully.

### ***Communication***

It will be clear that issues of power-control, empowerment delegation and trust are closely tied to questions of communication. In school “A” communication is more formal and is determined by the expertise and tasks that stakeholders are deemed skilled enough to undertake. There is a one-way communication from the Council to the rest of the stakeholders. Communication, whether verbal and nonverbal (Davies, 1994), is very limited and goes through the hierarchy. Parents, for example, only get to talk with class

teachers when they drop off their children at school and when they pick them up at the end of the day. Council members do not see the value and need of maintaining good communication with the other stakeholders.

Also, the Council makes the decisions without adequate collection of relevant data and feedback from the other stakeholders. It is, in fact, unclear how they manage to reach any decision and why, in the absence of open communication between them and the rest of the stakeholders. The claim by Hargrave (1994) that establishing continuous channels of communication between the governing body and the rest of the stakeholders is a crucial factor in promoting governors' effectiveness, does not apply to this school. Nevertheless, the Council appears to be rather effective even without such ideal communication channels in place.

In contrast, in school "B", the owner believes in the value of maintaining good communication with the other stakeholders through regular meetings with the deputy head and teachers, and whenever that is needed. There is a two-way exchange of information in an open atmosphere of respect. Communication flows in all directions and everyone is aware of the opinions and concerns of the other stakeholders. This communication allows them to share their views and thoughts with the other stakeholders and clear up any misunderstandings. This communication aids solutions to various concerns and helps to achieve shared goals and objectives.

The deputy head consults teachers about school matters and she includes them in making decisions. Similarly, she delegates and assigns duties to them. She keeps them informed about what is happening in the school. She allows them to make decisions such as organizing activities inside and outside the school, their classes, planning projects such as marketing the school in the community, especially the Learning Center, dealing with parents, dealing with children with learning/behavioral difficulties.

She also shares duties and responsibilities with the parents and the children and encourages them to be part of the school leadership. She invites parents to come into the school and assigns them tasks such as planning activities and organizing aspects in the school together with the teachers; excursions, fireworks nights, Christmas and Easter

parties. She meets with them regularly and updates them about school matters and the progress of their children. She asks for their opinion regarding the learning of their children. She attends PTA meetings and involves them in making decisions although she maintains her right to make the final decisions. She listens to their opinions and shows appreciation by addressing their concerns and she takes their opinions into account when making her decisions. She also assigns duties to children and holds them accountable such as ringing the school's bell and being prefects.

Both the owner and the deputy head are aware of the opinions and concerns of the other stakeholders and the school context. They are also aware of the nature of the tasks and the skills needed to accomplish them. Thus, they can hold the other stakeholders accountable.

The stakeholders including the children in both schools stress, either implicitly or explicitly, the significant impact of support in relation to their involvement. It had been noted in school "A" that the lack of support from the administrators of the school undermines the motivation of the other stakeholders to be more actively involved. While the deputy head, teachers and parents in school "B" feel more supported from the owner in both tangible and emotional ways. (Davies, 1994) For example, the school has a special program that provides counseling for parents and a special room for parents to meet.

When we look at these key heuristic and diagnostic concepts we can see how the differences in them in the two schools represent quite different forms of leadership. Arguably, they can be seen as key concepts in bringing out the key differences between the schools. The first research question: how is shared leadership conceptualized in schools? And the second : what practices comprise shared leadership in schools? Both questions can be analysed through the key concepts of Power-Control, Delegation, Empowerment, Trust and Communication, because they allow us to differentiate between shared leadership practices and those that are not examples of shared leadership. We are now in a position to return to the research questions.



## Addressing the Research Questions

1) How is shared leadership conceptualized in schools? 2) What practices comprise shared leadership? 3) In particular, can questions one and two be usefully analyzed through the concepts of Power-Control, Delegation, Empowerment, Trust and Communication? 4) In what ways, if any, is shared leadership beneficial for these schools?

I will discuss these questions together since there is a remarkable consistency between conceptualization and practice in the respective schools and since there is a significant contrast in their leadership conceptualizations and practices, while achieving similar results this opens a key issue under question 4.

This study was carried out in two case schools in Cyprus: school “A” and school “B”.

Both schools are successful in terms of students’ academic results. (Table 1)

Subjects	School “A”	School “B”	School “A”	School “B”
	Grade 5	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 6
English Language (Comprehension, Spelling, Composition, Grammar)	87%	88%	85%	86%
Mathematics	86%	87%	84%	85%
Science	90%	89%	88%	91%
Geography	86%	85%	87%	88%
History	81%	83%	86%	85%
Greek Language	78%	76%	80%	79%

Table 1: The Total Percentage Average Tests Results of the students in grade 5 and 6 in School “A” and School “B” of the Academic year September, 2009 - June, 2010

The above table compares the academic scores of the students in grade 5 and 6 in the two schools in core subjects during the academic year 2009-1010. The total percentages shown in the table are the result of assessing the performance of the students in two stages: stage one where three tests were conducted between December and January and the average percentage from the three tests were recorded. Stage two where two tests were carried out during May and the average score was recorded. Then the scores of both stages were added and the average percentages were recorded as shown in the table. It is clear from the table that, excluding the Greek language, the students in both schools obtained high grades. The reason for the lower scores of the Greek language is because most students come from different backgrounds where their first language is not Greek. It is important to note however that these tables are ‘suggestive’ in that while they show comparable results, they tell us nothing about the value added by schools. This is because these data do not have baseline test scores and additional data on parental background by which an estimate of the respective value added contributions of the two schools.

A significant difference between the two schools is that in school “A”, Council members employ a top-down model of leadership. While in school “B”, both the owner and the deputy head employ a shared /distributed model of leadership. This means that applying different models of leadership have led these schools to be successful. So it is unclear as to whether a shared/distributed leadership model is the only beneficial form of leadership in all schools. Is it that a variety of equally good leadership models can lead to a school’s success? In this case: what is special about applying shared/distributed leadership that is missing in the other models of leadership including top-down models? Further research is needed in order to investigate this. However, there are some conclusions that can be tentatively drawn.

From the study findings, the advantages of applying shared /distributed leadership is in its impact on relationships and cooperation amongst the stakeholders, on teachers’ motivation and commitment to the school and on the school climate. In school “A”, teachers are not motivated and committed; they do what they have to do without enthusiasm. Their morale is low and they feel unappreciated. All this may reflect on their

teaching in the classrooms. Also, parents don't feel motivated and committed and therefore they prefer not to be more involved. Hence, lack of cooperation and commitment to the school may create a negative school climate that may hinder students' learning in the longer term and raises questions about the sustainability of this model of leadership. For example, teacher 6 said: "[Not participating in decision making with the council] is what causes a lot of frustration here and morale is the worst it has ever been...things are imposed without consultation with the staff and we are frustrated about this...[sharing leadership] would make me feel more positive, give me more energy and I would probably give more, because at the moment I am giving the minimum". Also, parent 5 said: "PTA is just for fund raising, many parents don't go to PTA meetings, they don't find results, no matter how many good ideas there are, nothing comes through."

While the findings from school "B" shows that the stakeholders, especially teachers and parents are more motivated, committed to the school. As a result the school climate is positive and relationships are enhanced. Hence, it is possible that applying shared/distributed leadership may lead to more sustainable school improvements and academic performance just because the teachers are more motivated and committed. Hence, they are more willing to make a difference in the school and to impact positively on students' learning.

The review of related literature, however, has not provided much contribution in trying to understand the research questions in regard to school "A". Yet, the study, in itself, adequately contributed in uncovering answers to the research questions. The stakeholders understand shared leadership based on their perceived role in the school. For these stakeholders, shared leadership is about staying informed, consulted and appreciated. They are able to be involved in the areas they are interested in; their demands and concerns are addressed properly (Figure 1). The stakeholders see all the above with minimum time and effort required on their part. They want to influence school matters but they don't want to be responsible so they delegate back leadership to the head teacher. They assign responsibility to her to make decisions and hold her accountable for those decisions. The suggested model of shared leadership will result in the Council still having the most power and the deciding vote in most decisions as none of the other

stakeholders are totally willing to put in the extra time and effort required for shared leadership. Therefore, the Council and their policies remain unchallenged.

In contrast, in school “B”, the review of related literature together with the study findings answered to a great extent the research questions. The stakeholders’ understanding of shared leadership is in accordance with the reviewed literature. Leadership for the stakeholders means sharing of duties, responsibilities and decisions, being accountable for their decisions and actions and cooperating and trusting each other (Figure 2).

The decision to utilize a qualitative approach as the main tool for investigation was mostly due to its suitability for my topic of inquiry. It is interpretive and the perception of reality is subjective. This approach does not only describe how things are but likewise seeks answers on people’s feelings aside from the meanings and the values that they attach to different aspects of their lives (Gay, 1996). Consequently, knowledge is derived from discernment of meanings and interpretations of social events while reality is understood during the course of interaction.

Applying semi-structured interviews was made a part of the process because I was seeking to gain in-depth knowledge about shared leadership and the role various stakeholders play in it. Furthermore, considering the difficulty in having access to complete information since some stakeholders in both schools, especially parents, cannot be expected to write detailed answers necessary for some queries. Holding conversations and using prompt questions had been the best approach to elicit responses that would more accurately represent their views.

This particular research design was employed which consisted of a case study and semi-structured interviews helped in obtaining answers to my research questions. It informs how stakeholders understand shared leadership in reality and how they see the benefits from their schools.

I have relied mainly on interview accounts to draw conclusions about stakeholders' understanding of shared leadership. However, there are limitations to the research if it relies only on self-reporting since it is not always the case that what the interviewees say is necessarily related, in an accurate way, to their practice. The aim of the study was to provide a credible accounts of leaders' interpretations of distributed leadership so the focus is on the internal coherence of their statements about distributed leadership.

However, it is not always the case that such accounts will always be internally coherent. And, indeed some of the most interesting insights can be gained when anomalies appear in their accounts. Data triangulation was employed to interrogate further the coherence of their accounts. Here, the researcher compared the data from different participants and schools as a way to uncover where there might be distinct differences in the views of the different stakeholders groups, which then needs to be explained in terms of the way leadership is carried out. While there was triangulation between the views of Council members, head teachers and staff, a stronger evidential basis for these conclusions would have included data from observations (Hammersley, 2003). Also, according to Lee and Roth (2004), interviews are joint process or active interactions between a researcher and participants in a certain social context that entails issues of identity management, self-presentation and accounting, “ issues of identity and self-presentation are at stake and have to be managed actively but are usually ignored or glossed over when taking interviews solely as a resource” (P. 3). This is especially pertinent when relating the interviewees' accounts of distributed leadership with the complex ways in which they might relate to practice. Therefore, future studies need to go beyond interviews to triangulate them with observations of practice, as Hammersley suggests.

In addition, the investigation was undertaken in a specific cultural and educational context; thus, it is not guaranteed that similar results would be achieved if the same study were carried out in other contexts. Also, it was undertaken in private and primary schools, hence, it is unclear that similar results would be achieved if the same study were conducted in public and secondary schools. This study does not attempt to present a comprehensive picture of shared leadership; neither does it attempt to generalize from its

findings. Nevertheless, it offers to broaden our understanding of the meaning of shared leadership as perceived by the stakeholders themselves and its usefulness to their school.

The experience of this study has altered my views and assumptions in several ways, including: my role in school as a teacher, my learning process and my assumptions about school leadership.

Before, I thought that my role in school as a teacher was mainly to teach and help the head teacher run the school. I could not see why and how I could be part of the school leadership, where I could make significant decisions that influence aspects of the school. Now, I see my role to entail more than just that. I feel that I should be part of the school leadership, where I can decide about important matters. I appreciate more my role as a teacher and I have more trust that teachers can make a positive difference in school and students' learning if they are given the opportunity to do that. Now I understand how it works to be part of school leadership and what needs to be done in order to share it.

Moreover, before, I thought that leadership was about the characteristics, experiences and knowledge of the leader only. I also thought that if schools have effective leaders who possess good qualities that would be enough to run the school effectively. Now, I see leadership in a different way. I see it as a broad concept that entails many aspects. It is about what leaders do, how they do things, how they interact with other people during this process, and what comes out from all these interactions. I see it as a type of leadership that can work in school and with positive outcomes. I believe that the work of leaders can become much easier and more effective if the stakeholders work together, and that will have a positive impact on schools and students.

Additionally, before, my focus was on how stakeholders in school see their role and the role of others, including the advantages and disadvantages. Consequently, my interview questions during the first round of the study and in the first school focused just on that. Thus, I overlooked significant data about other aspects such as how stakeholders saw school leadership and what leadership meant for them and how sharing of leadership can

work in schools. I also consulted literature that discusses mainly shared leadership and in business organizations and ignored the availability of rich and critical literature that discusses sharing of leadership in schools. Therefore, I did not feel that I had a solid foundation to build my argument and this paper on. Thus, I needed to go back and consult literature that discussed or related directly to shared leadership in schools. Therefore, during my second round of interviews in the second school I asked the stakeholders questions that mainly targetted shared/distributed leadership. This process of consulting relevant literature was useful in many ways, it allowed me to:

- Learn more about my topic and the various literature that discusses sharing of leadership in schools;
- Investigate the underlying issues that interplay when it comes to sharing school leadership;
- Uncover the tools needed in order to apply this type of leadership, and how it really works in schools; and
- Hopefully write and present my topic in a better way.

Also, during the first round of interviews in school “A”, I identified certain factors, including: time, accountability and support, as constraints on applying shared leadership. After the second round of interviews in school “B” and finding that the stakeholders did not put any limitations/constraints on their role in the school, I looked at these factors from a different perspective. I see them to be included in the way that leaders present and perform the leadership activities. It is possible that the stakeholders in school “A” put these constraints on their role in school not because they did not want to be part of school leadership; rather it is because the Council members held on to power and refused to share it with them. So it is the senior leadership in the school that has the responsibility, power and authority either to make the other stakeholders part of the leadership or not. All that needs further investigation.

Nonetheless, with the amount of knowledge and experience gained with this study, I would conduct this study again if given the opportunity while taking into account three aspects:

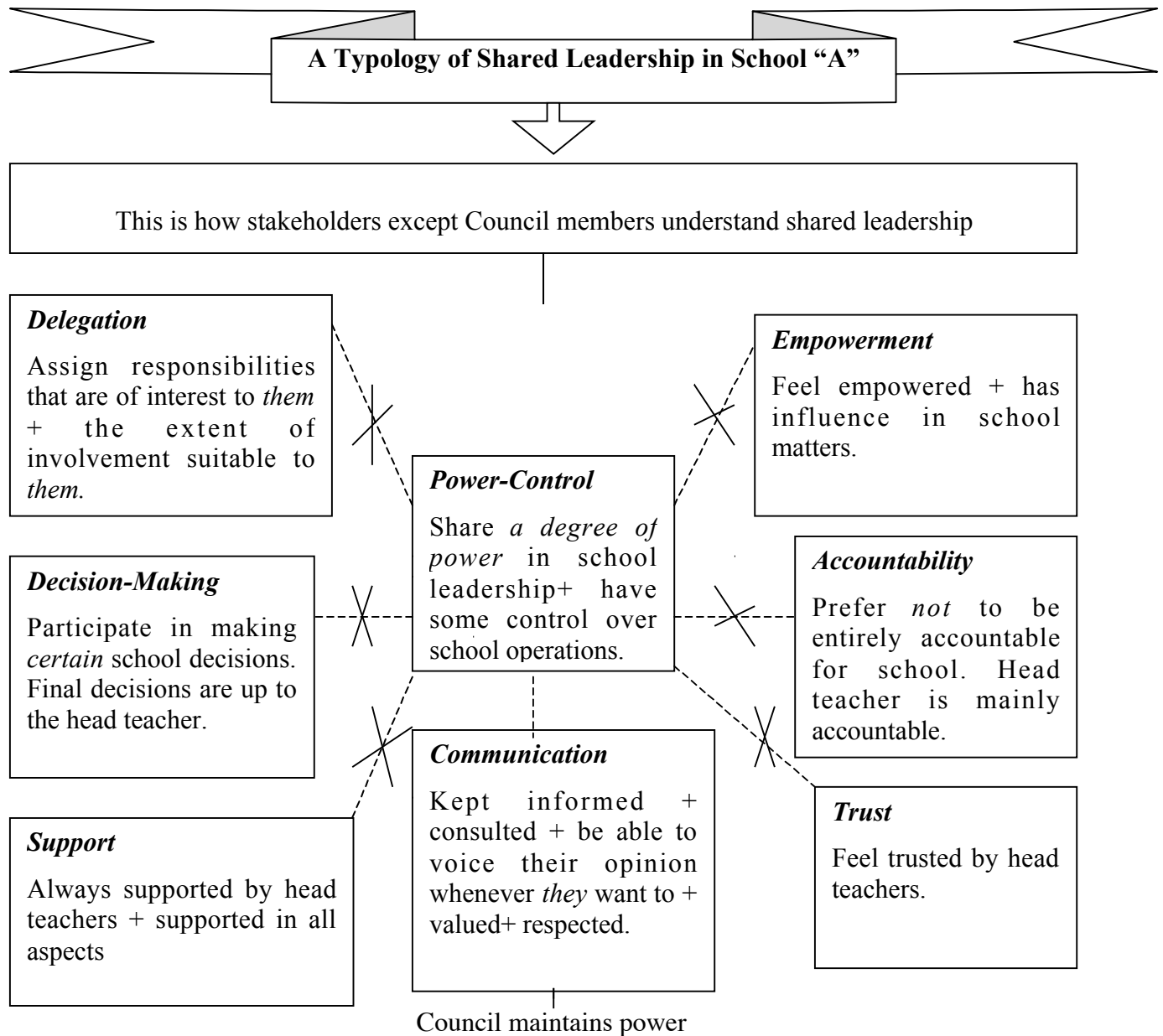
1. More case studies in private and public schools in different contexts would be included, this is in order to:
  - Allow better comparison between schools to recognize certain patterns about stakeholders' involvement in schools;
  - Find out about the impact of school's situational and cultural context on leadership;
  - Allow a comparison between schools that employ different leadership styles/models and the impact of using these leadership styles on stakeholders and schools.
2. Increase the number of participants per stakeholder group to achieve a more representative sample; and
3. Perform two rounds of semi-structured interviews to check if similar results would be obtained.

Future studies need to investigate whether shared/distributed leadership actually leads to school improvements or if it is just one amongst other effective leadership models that promote school's functions; in particular whether shared leadership leads to greater sustainability in performance because it creates a better form of motivation and commitment amongst staff. Furthermore, since in this study both top-down and shared/distributed leadership models have lead the schools to be successful, future studies need to investigate that and to find out what is special about applying shared/distributed leadership. Moreover, they need to focus on attaining in-depth investigation on the following:

- The perceptions of stakeholders in both private and public schools and in different contexts using many case studies;
- Find ways/tools how to develop one's leadership in schools;
- Ways on how to develop and maintain stakeholders' commitment and motivation to employ shared leadership in schools. For instance, allowing teachers to have a more significant share in the school; and
- How to develop supportive programs for head teachers and teachers in order to enhance their skills in applying shared leadership.

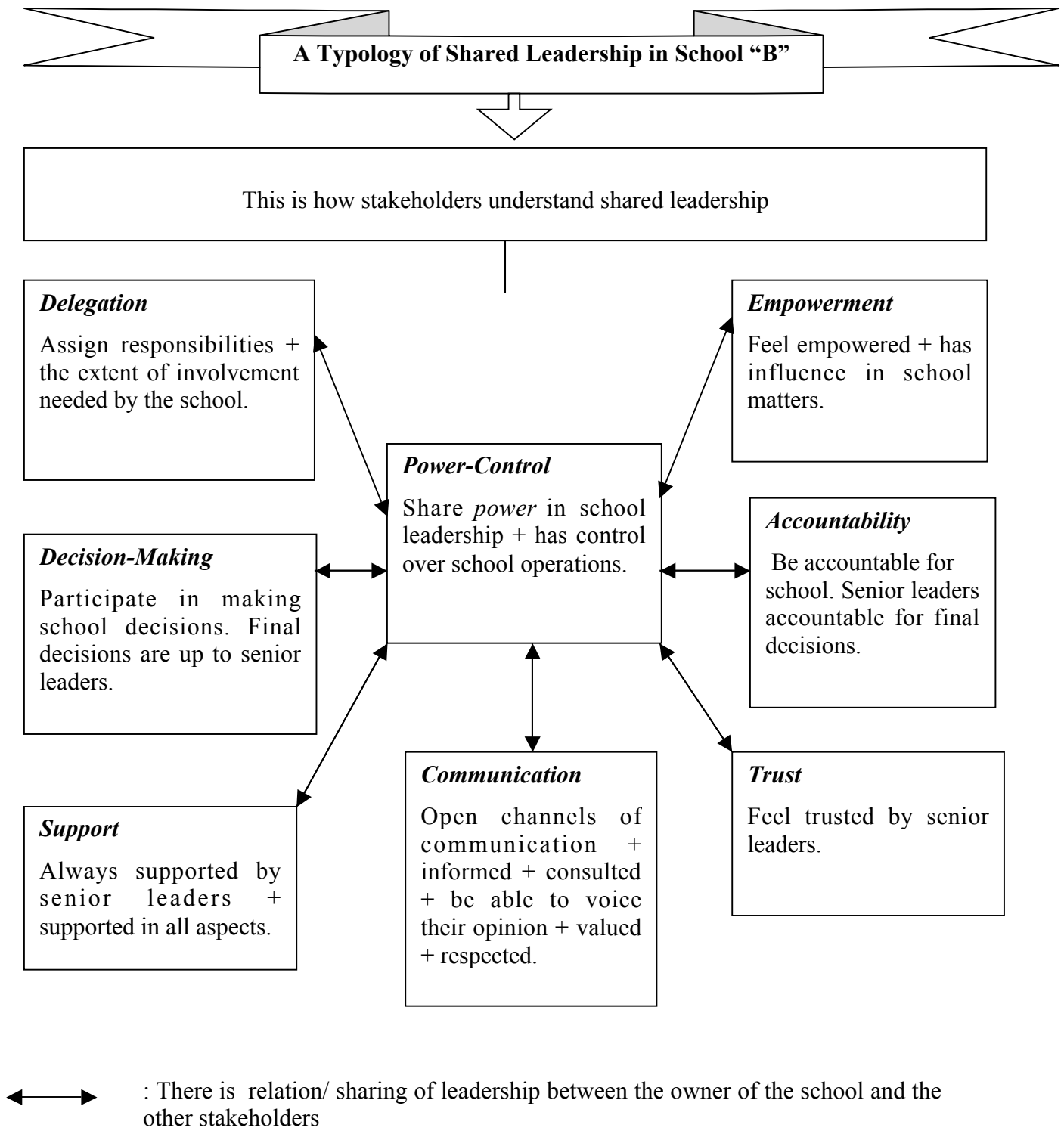


**Figure 1: A Typology of Shared Leadership in School “A”**



---X---:There is some or no relation/sharing of leadership between Council members and the other stakeholders

**Figure 2: A Typology of Shared Leadership in School “B”**



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## APPENDIX 1



### The Education System

#### 1. Summary

(Information taken from a document prepared in October 1998 by the Ministry of Education and Culture entitled “The Cyprus Chapter for Structures of the Education and Initial Training Systems in the European Union”, the homepage of the Ministry of Education and Culture and “Statistics of Education” The Statistical Service of Cyprus (CYSTAT), Ministry of Finance 1998/1999, 1999/2000 and 2000/2001).

The general aim of education in Cyprus, according to the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC), is the development of free and democratic citizens, who will contribute meaningfully to the social, scientific, economic, and cultural progress of the country, and the promotion of freedom, justice and peace.

In Cyprus education is provided through pre-primary and primary schools, secondary general and secondary technical/vocational schools, special schools, the University of Cyprus and other tertiary level institutions and non-formal institutions and centers. Public schools are mainly financed from public funds, while private schools raise their funds primarily from tuition fees

#### 1.1 Administration

Educational administration is highly centralized. Policy making rests with the Council of Ministers. Overall responsibility for education rests with the Ministry of Education (extended in 1994 to include Culture). However, a small number of vocational and post-secondary institutions come under the Ministry of Labor and Social Insurance, Agriculture and Health. The MOEC is responsible for the administration of education, the enforcement of education laws and, in co-operation with the Office of the Attorney General, the preparation of education bills. The bills are tabled for debate and approval by the House of Representatives. The MOEC also prescribes syllabuses, curricula and textbooks.

Appointments, secondments, transfers, promotions and discipline of the teaching personnel and the inspectorate are the responsibility of the Education Service Commission, a five-member body appointed by the President of the Republic for a period of six years.

The construction of school buildings is the responsibility of the MOEC while their maintenance is undertaken by the local School Boards in collaboration with the Technical Services of the Ministry. The responsibility for equipment of school buildings is shared

by the Ministry and the local School Boards. Overall planning is the responsibility of the Planning Bureau, an independent authority of the Republic. Similar planning is done by all ministries which offer post-secondary specialized education. Their development policies are first submitted to the Planning Bureau for comments before they are forwarded to the Council of Ministers for final approval.

### **1.2 Inspection/supervision/guidance**

At the pre-primary, primary and secondary level, overall responsibility for supervising the proper functioning of the schools rests with the inspectorate. Moreover, in the case of public education, the inspectorate has responsibility for the implementation of the government's educational policies for curriculum development and for the appraisal of the teaching personnel. There are inspectorates for every directorate at these levels. At the primary and pre-primary levels, the majority of the inspectors have responsibilities for all the subjects but there are some that have responsibility for special subjects (art, physical education etc.) or areas (e.g. special education). At the secondary level, the inspectors have responsibilities in particular areas of the curriculum (e.g. mathematics, philology etc). It is also their responsibility to act as advisors and guide the teachers they inspect to improve their performance and develop professionally. Responding to this responsibility, they organize educational seminars of a practical nature at least twice a year.

At the tertiary level, the responsibility for accreditation of private institutions rests with an independent body, the Council for Assessment and Accreditation, while the supervision and registration of such institutions is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Ministry's officers also have the responsibility for supervising and ensuring that private tertiary institutions comply with the provisions of the laws. The Cyprus Council for Academic Recognition is an independent body with responsibility for the academic recognition of diplomas and certificates from various sources.

Private schools are independently administered but are registered with the MOEC. The Ministry inspects the schools but not the teachers since no special inspectorate is available for this yet. Private schools have to obey certain specific laws and regulations and the MOEC has the authority to examine whether the laws and regulations are implemented.

## **2. Pre-school education**

There is a well-established pre-primary education system with state kindergarten institutions supported by community and parental involvement as well as private pre-schools, serving approximately 75% of the child population aged 3 to 5 years and 8 months. Attendance is not compulsory, but is recommended for the enrichment of the children's experiential background.

State kindergartens cater for approximately 64% of pre-school children of middle or low-income families. Admission criteria are based on yearly income and family status (working, single-parent or refugee families). Private kindergartens cater for children not accommodated in the state sector.

## **3. Compulsory Education**

All Cypriots are required by law to attend school full time from age 5 years and 8 months to age 15, or until they complete their third year in the Gymnasium, whichever comes first. The system is divided into six years of primary education and three years of lower secondary education.

### **3.1 Primary Education**

Primary education is provided free of charge and with no entrance requirements in public primary schools available throughout the country, even in remote areas. A small number of private primary schools charge fees and cater for foreign nationals and Cypriots who opt for a particular foreign language as the basis of instruction for their children. All private schools are subject to supervision and inspection by the MOEC. Primary schools are co-educational and provide mixed-ability teaching. In urban areas and large rural schools, Cyprus has adopted single-grade classes, while small communities are catered for by multi-grade classes.

### **3.2 Secondary Education**

Secondary education is compulsory for children up to the age of fifteen, and is accessible to both urban and rural or outreach communities alike.

#### **3.2.1. Public**

Secondary schooling consists of two stages. Stage I (Gymnasium) comprises the first three grades, and the emphasis is on general subjects and the humanities. Stage II (Lyceums) comprises the last three grades, and specialization begins in grade IV.

#### **3.2.2. Private**

There are a number of non-profit and profit-making secondary establishments, ranging from missionary schools to vocationally oriented institutions and foreign language schools. Although private secondary schools maintain a considerable degree of independence in their operation and curricula, the majority of them are registered with the MOEC and comply with certain curriculum and facility requirements mandated by law.

### **3.3. Curriculum**

#### **3.3.1. Public schools – Lower Secondary (Gymnasio)**

Gymnasio caters for pupils aged twelve to fifteen and offers a broad spectrum of general education. A public primary school leaving certificate is required for entrance to the Gymnasio. Private foreign-language primary school leavers must undergo entrance examinations in order to enter public secondary schools.

Uniformity and coherence in the syllabus aims to allow a smooth transition from primary school to secondary education. In the last year of the Gymnasium, vocational guidance offers pupils an opportunity to familiarize themselves with career prospects, explore academic options after successful completion of the Gymnasium, and thus select the field or combination of studies they wish to follow in the upper division.

#### **3.3.2. Private Schools**

Curriculum programs for most private secondary schools extend over a seven- year period, with the emphasis on general education for the first three years. Foreign language

schools have six- or seven-year curriculum programs with English, French, Italian or Arabic as the basic languages of instruction. A few private secondary schools are attached to primary schools providing an integrated twelve- or thirteen-year program. There are no entrance examinations except in certain foreign language schools.

#### **3.4. Assessment/Guidance**

Continuous assessment in the Gymnasio is on a scale of A-E. It is both oral and written (quizzes, revision tests and individual or group projects) supplemented by compulsory internally set final examinations in June each year on a 1-20 scale for Greek, Mathematics, History and Natural Science. The Department of Secondary Education is considering the inclusion of English in the final examinations. In the last year of the Gymnasio, vocational guidance offers pupils an opportunity to familiarize themselves with career prospects, explore academic options after successful completion of the Gymnasio, and thus select the field or combination of studies they wish to follow in the upper division. Private schools follow their own assessment system.



## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Invitation Letter to the Senior School Principal in School “A” (20/04/2004) + the Owner in School “B” (16/04/2010)**

Dear Mr. (...),

I am enrolled as an Educated Doctorate student at the University of (...). At this stage (year) I am working on my thesis, which is about stakeholders (head teachers, heads of departments, teachers, parents, students, members in the school council, members in the Ministry of Education) involvement in leadership practices. My aim from conducting the study is to find out how stakeholders in school understand shared leadership and their role and the applicability (usefulness) of it to school context.

Through my study I hope to find out about how the stakeholders perceive their role in school and the role of other stakeholders and how they perceive their relationship with the school leader (leadership). Similarly how they perceive the areas that they wish to be involved in, why and how, and how they perceive the advantages/disadvantages of their role. Likewise how they understand shared leadership and its applicability (usefulness) to their school.

I would like to have your permission to carry out structured interviews on a number of stakeholders. The interviews will be conducted in the participant's spare time and for a limited time period. I might also need to send out questionnaires to the different stakeholders. I will need to get data regarding aspects such as: schools history, students and staff numbers, students' backgrounds, etc. you will be informed regarding the study developments.

An official letter from the University regarding this matter is available upon request. Once I have received your permission to carry out this investigation, I will present you with the project outline. Ethical rules and procedures will be taken into account such as: participants' identity will remain anonymous; information will be treated with the strictest confidentiality; etc. Letters will be sent out to all participants informing them about the study, the purposes, the procedures, etc.

If you have any comments, suggestions or questions regarding this matter please do not hesitate to contact me, as this might help me in writing up my paper. I appreciate all your help and hope to hear from you soon.

Yours Sincerely,  
Sahirah Ohlsson

Tel: 24-626293

E-mail address: [sahiraho@yahoo.com](mailto:sahiraho@yahoo.com).

**Invitation Letter to the Head Teacher of the Primary School Department in School  
“A” (30/04/2004) + the Deputy Head in School “B” (16/04/2010)**

Dear (...),

I am enrolled as an Educated Doctorate student at the University of (...). At this stage (year) I am working on my thesis, which is about stakeholders (head teachers, heads of departments, teachers, parents, students, members in the school council, members in the Ministry of Education) involvement in leadership practices. My aim from conducting the study is to find out how stakeholders in school understand shared leadership and their role and the applicability (usefulness) of it to school context.

Through my study I hope to find out about how the stakeholders perceive their role in school and the role of other stakeholders and how they perceive their relationship with the school leader (leadership). Similarly how they perceive the areas that they wish to be involved in, why and how, and how they perceive the advantages/disadvantages of their role. Likewise how they understand shared leadership and its applicability (usefulness) to their school.

I would like to have your permission to carry out structured interviews (details attached) on a number of stakeholders, as part of my study. The interviews will be conducted in the participant's spare time and for a limited time period. I will need to get data regarding aspects such as: students and staff numbers and students' backgrounds. You will be regularly informed of all the developments of my study.

This practical research is supposed to shed some light on stakeholders' role in private schools in Cyprus. Please let me know if you require an official letter from the University regarding this matter. Once I have received your permission to carry out this investigation, I will present you with the project outline. All ethical rules and procedures will be taken into consideration such as: participants' identity will remain anonymous and information will be treated with the strictest confidentiality. Letters will be sent out to all participants informing them about the study, the purposes, the procedures, etc.

If you have any comments, suggestions or questions regarding this matter please do not hesitate to contact me, as this will help me in writing up my paper. I appreciate all your help and hope to hear from you soon.

Yours Sincerely,  
Sahirah Ohlsson

**Tel: 24-626293**

E-mail: [sahiraho@yahoo.com](mailto:sahiraho@yahoo.com)

### **Details About the Interviews (Attached with the Invitation Letters)**

1- what procedures will be taken before starting the interviews?

Letters will be sent out to teachers and to parents through students which will present information about the study such as the purposes, aims, procedures; details about the interviews such as the type, the aims, number of questions, the length, when to conduct the interviews; what they are expected to do; etc. The letters will end up by inviting everyone to participate in the study.

There will be a section in the letters which invites all participants to respond (within a specific time limit) as to whether they want to take part in the study, simply by ticking yes /no in the allocated boxes. An additional area will be provided for comments. All replies are supposed to be submitted to the school secretary.

2- Whom exactly I would like to interview?

-The head teacher/deputy head;

-Teachers;

-Parents that would; and

-Children.

3- How many participants will be included in the interviews?

All stakeholders in the school are welcomed to take part in the study

4- When is the time to conduct the interviews?

The interviews will be carried out mainly in the participants' spare time and during school hours.

5- Where to carry out the interviews?

The interviews should preferably be carried out on the school premises, otherwise a location will be arranged.

6- What type of interviews will be employed?

I will employ structured interviews, which means that there are a limited number of questions and a limited time for answers.

7- How long time does it take to carry out each interview?

I think it will take nearly half an hour.

8- How many questions are included?

There are around 18 questions

9- What sort of questions are they?

They are questions about whether they think they should be involved in school matters and why, and the areas that they wish to be involved in. Similarly, how they perceive the advantages/disadvantages of their role. Likewise how they perceive a successful head teacher. This sort of questions

10- How the interview will be administered?

The interviews will be given individually and privately. Questions will be asked and answers will be noted or if possible tape-recorded.

11- What will happen once the interviews are finished?

Letters of thanks will be sent out to all participants.

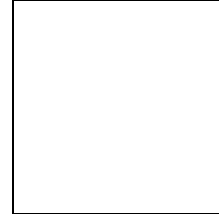
Data will be collected and analyzed as part of the study. Conclusions, comments and recommendations will be presented as part of the final report.

12- When to start the interviews?

After the Easter holiday, possibly during May.

## APPENDIX 3

### Invitation Letters to Teachers in School “A” + School “B”



Dear teachers:

**I know you are very busy, so I will try to cut the long story short!!**

As a teacher, you are given the opportunity to voice your opinion about whether you think you should be involved in how the school is run, how you think you can become involved, and what you think your school leader should do/not do in order to involve you. This is part of a study that aims to shed some light on teachers’ involvement in one private school in Cyprus.



-----  
Please circle your choice around the appropriate number and give the slip as soon as possible to the school secretary:

- I would like to take part in a structured interview that will take about half an hour (this interview can be carried out on a casual basis over a coffee, if you like!!).
- I would like to take part in this study by answering a questionnaire.
- I do not want to take part in this study. The reason(s) (if possible):

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- I can take part in this study before the summer holiday
- I can take part in this study after the summer holiday.
- I do not mind if the interview is tape-recorded.
- I mind if the interview is tape-recorded.
- I give my permission to conduct interviews with/give out questionnaires to the parents of the children in my class.
- I do not give my permission to conduct interviews with/give out questionnaires to the parents of the children in my class.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation.

Yours Sincerely,  
Sahirah Ohlsson

**Invitation Letters to Parents in School “A” (10/9/2004) + in School “B” (18/04/2010)**

Date:

Dear Parent(s):

I am an ex parent who has done supply teaching in the school ( a parent) and I am doing research for my Doctorate Degree Program - with the school's permission. I am interested in researching parents' opinions regarding their involvement in their child's education in the school environment and invite them to participate. If you willing to take part, this will be in the form of an interview, which is structured and has a limited number of questions and a limited time for answers (maximum thirty minutes). The interviews will be conducted on the school premises, during school hours, and in the participants' spare time, possibly, when you leave your child in the morning. The interviews will be given individually and privately. Questions will be asked and the answers will be tape-recorded. It is important to tape-record the interview because this will allow me to concentrate on the conversation during the interview, and will allow me to go back and analyze the recorded information after the interview. Your identity will remain completely confidential.

You are kindly requested to fill in the next page and return it with your child to the class teacher within maximum one week from the date of this letter. I will contact you as soon as I receive your replies.

I would like to thank you in advance for your co-operation. Your opinion is necessary and will be presented as a significant part in my report.

Yours Sincerely  
Sahirah Ohlsson

**Please circle your choice around the appropriate numbers:**

1 - I want to take part in the interviews.

2- I do not want to take part in this study. The reason(s) (if possible)

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3- I accept that the interview is tape-recorded.

4- One parent will take part in this study.

5- Both parents would like to take part in this study.

If you have any additional comments regarding the content of this letter, please write this  
b e l o w : -

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Name of child: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact telephone number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your co-operation.

Sahirah Ohlsson

**Letters of Thanks to Parents in School “A” 20/10/2004) + School “B” ( 27/09/2010)**

Dear parents,

I would like to thank you very much for your understanding and support that you showed, by participating in the interviews or allowing your child to take part in group interviews. Your comments and suggestions, once collected, will be put forward to the school leadership.

Best wishes,  
Sahirah Ohlsson

## APPENDIX 4

### Interview Questions to Members in the School Council in School “A”

[To day is the (..)of month,2004, and I am about to interview a council members in a private school in Cyprus to find out what he thinks about his role and stakeholders' involvement in how the school is run. The time now is (....)]

1. What are the characteristics/qualities of a good/successful school leader: principal /head teacher?
2. How do you think an unsuccessful principal would behave and act?
3. Describe in your opinion the visions that the principal should possess in order to be considered a successful leader?
4. Explain how do you think the principal is supposed to make his decisions regarding school matters?
5. In case of disputes/conflicts/disagreements happening within the school, how do you think/expect a successful principal should handle that?
6. From your point of view should the school council be involved (making decisions) in how the school is running/operating? Why?
7. Describe what areas/aspects of school life you would like/want as a school board member to become involved in?
8. Can you describe in your opinion how the school council should be involved, by/through what means?
9. How far you think should the principal take your interests/concerns/wishes into account/consideration?
10. Suppose the principal took a decision that you are not happy/accept for one reason or another, what would you do?
11. Are there any circumstances/situations when the principal/head teacher can/should avoid taking what you want/wish into consideration, basically, do what he/she wants without consulting you?
12. How can the principal encourage/discourage you to become involved in decision-making regarding school operations?
13. From your point of view how can the principal encourage you to become an active member in the school council who is committed and collaborative in participating in decision-making regarding the school?
14. How far are you willing to become involved in the running of the school? Considering the extra time and effort involved?
15. What do you think are the possible positive outcomes of the school council involvement in decision-making regarding school operations?
16. What do you think are the possible negative consequences of this involvement, if you think there are any?
17. Are there any other comments that you would like to add regarding the school council involvement in the school and which I did not mention?



## **APPENDIX 5**

### **Interview Questions to the Head Teacher in School “A”**

[To day is the (..)of June, 2004, and I am about to interview an elementary school head teacher in a private school in Cyprus to find out what she thinks about stakeholders' involvement in how the school is run. The time now is (....)]

1. Who are the stakeholders in any school from your point of view?
2. Should they be involved/not involved in how the school is run? Why? (Talk about each stakeholder group)
3. Are there any circumstances/situations when you think that you should not take stakeholders opinions into consideration?
4. What factors/aspects influence your decisions regarding who should be involved in making decisions?
5. In case that you believe that stakeholders should be involved, can you describe the areas of school life that you think each stakeholder group could be involved in?
6. The stakeholders who want to be involved, how would you as a head teacher facilitate/help them to become involved/make it possible?
7. What would you do to encourage any stakeholder group to become committed and collaborative?
8. How far are you willing to do so considering the extra time and effort involved?
9. What would you do if they don't want to be involved for one reason or another?
10. Describe the qualities /characteristics that you have and you think make you a successful head teacher? And why do you think they make you successful? What effects you think they have on the school?
11. Suppose that you do not possess those qualities; you think that would make you an unsuccessful head teacher? How and why?
12. Describe how do you handle situations where there are conflicting opinions?
13. Do you think any stakeholder should be involved in day-to-day decision-making? Why? Do you allow them to make these decisions or you take full responsibility to do so?
14. Prompt: what would you react if you are in a situation where you find it difficult to reach a final decision about a certain matter?
15. Can you describe the expected possible positive outcomes of stakeholders' involvement?
16. What are the expected possible negative consequences of stakeholders' involvement, if you think there are any?
17. Are there any other comments that you would like to add about this topic?

Thank you. The time now is (...)

## APPENDIX 6

### Interview Questions to the Teachers in School “A”

[Interview No. (...)]

To day is the (.. ) of month, 2004, and I am about to interview an elementary school teacher in a private school in Cyprus to find out what she thinks about her involvement in how the school is run. The time now is (...)]

1. What do you think makes a good head teacher/principal? What are the characteristics/qualities of such a head teacher/ principal?
2. What do you thing should the priorities of a head teacher/principal be?
3. Suppose there is conflicting situation, how do you think/expect your head teacher to handle that? (Don't give example unless participant doesn't understand)
4. Do you think that you should be involved in how the school is run, for example, participating in decisions regarding extra activities, curriculum, etc., why?
5. If you think that you should be involved; can you describe how you think that would be possible or achievable?
6. 6-Are there any circumstances/situations when you think that your head teacher/principal should avoid taking your opinions into consideration? And why?
7. Do you think you should be involved in day-to-day decision-making? Why? And if yes, how do you think that is possible?
8. If you think that you should be involved, How can the head teacher/principal encourage / discourage you to become committed and collaborative in participating in decisions regarding school matters?
9. Can you describe what areas of school life that you want to be involved in?
10. Prompt: what about if the principal thinks that you should be involved in a certain area and you don't agree to that, and the opposite, if the principal thinks that you shouldn't be involved in a certain area but you think that you should?
11. What do you think are the possible positive outcomes of your involvement?
12. Do you see anything-negative coming out from your involvement and what are they?
13. Are there any other comments that you would like to add regarding this topic?

Thank you. The time now is (...)

## **APPENDIX 7**

### **Interview Questions to Parents in School “A”**

[Interview No. (...)]

To day is the (.. ) of (month), 2004, and I am about to interview a parents of a child in the school to find out what she thinks about her/his role in how the school is run. The time now is (...)]

1. Drawing on the experience you have had in schools, what do you think makes a good head teacher/principal? What are the qualities/characteristics of such a head teacher/principal?
2. What do you thing the priorities of a head teacher/principal should be?
3. Suppose there is a conflicting situation in the school, how do you think/expect your head teacher / principal to handle that?
4. Do you think that parents should be involved / have a say / help in how the school is run? And why?
5. If you think that parents should be involved in how the school is run, what school activities / areas do you think that you can contribute to? Why?
6. If you think that you should be involved; can you describe how you think that would be possible or achievable?
7. How can the head teacher/principal encourage / discourage you to become committed and collaborative in participating in decisions regarding school matters? (What do you think a head teacher/principal should do?)
8. What do you think are the possible positive outcomes of your involvement?
9. Do you see any negative outcomes from your involvement? If yes, what are they?
10. Are there any other comments that you would like to add regarding this topic?

Thank you (time)

## APPENDIX 8

### Interview Questions to Children/Students in School “A” + School “B”

**Introduction:** - Introducing myself, my work, what I plan to do in the classroom, and what I want them to do (ensure that they understand what is expected of them)

[Interview No. (...)]

To day is the (.. ) of month, 2004/2010, and I am about to interview a group of children in the school to find out what they think about their involvement in the school and the school’s leadership. The time now is (...)]

1. What do you think a good (leader!!) / head teacher/principal should be/do? What are the things that you think a good head teacher should have? How do you think a good head teacher should behave?
2. What do you think are the most important things that a good principal/ head teacher should think about / do / take care of in the school?
3. Think / assume that there is a fight among children in the school for example, in the playground, what do you think / expect your head teacher/principal should do / say in order to solve the matter?
4. Do you like to take part / participate in school activities that help in the running of the school? Why?
5. If you like to help in the running of the school, can you tell me how you think you can do that? What things you would like to do?
6. What do you think your head teacher/principal should do in order to encourage you and make you always want to help / participate in the running of the school?
7. What do you think are the good things that can result from your contribution/help?
8. Can you think of any negative / not good outcomes that can come out from your help? What are they?
9. Is there anything extra that you would like to say / add about this topic/ our conversation/ the whole thing?

Thank You, (time)

## APPENDIX 9

### A Summary of the Questionnaires Replies

No	Questions	Board member	Teachers	Students	Parents
1	Do you think you should be <b>involved</b> in how the school is run? For example extra activities, curriculum, to what <b>extent</b> ? And <b>why</b> ? A- Yes B- to a certain extent C- No	- B. Able to see generally how the school is running	-B. Provides a sense of ownership -A. An essential factor for achieving high educational standards.	-B. students are responsible for choosing the proper educational establishment and to redress any problem	-B. how the school is run affects my child
2	In case you think that you should be involved, can you <b>describe</b> to me how that would look like?	-By being told of the major problems	-Committees, participating in the school board of directors	- By lobbying for changes in different areas	- School regular meetings
3	How do you think a <b>successful school leader</b> should think and act?	- Ensure that the school is running well in all aspects; not losing students	- Open-minded in all aspects - Support staff; open door for problems; honest positive feedback; set good example; be reachable and approachable	- A leader is born, not taught; motivates others; successfully unifying	- Open-minded; sense of humor; pleasant; problem solver; democratic; liberal; set high expectations; listen to others; inspiring; not dogmatic.
4	What do you believe a successful school leader should do in	-Here judgment and leadership are crucial traits; If not	-Listens to all parties involved; make ethical decisions that	-Should view all conflicting opinions either going for or against the	-Listen to all parties; discuss matters with them; form an opinion taking

	order to solve matters where there are <b>conflicting</b> opinions?	possible apply to school board	are in the best interest of the school community. -Form an 'ad-hock' committee with all involved parties; have the final decision	vision(s) of what he/she wants the 'end results' to be	into account students' interests hence, making the final decision.
5	Generally, how do you think a school leader is supposed to make her/his day-to-day <b>decisions</b> regarding school matters?	- Listen to the diverse opinions then form a judgment	-The whole management team should be asked for their opinions; a leader should make final decisions under the conditions that the school board agrees to these decisions. -Through democratically ways	-Based on considering school objectives and discarding all opinions that are not going towards that end.	-Having the interests of the students in mind; qualified academically; an educationalist; has good knowledge of research and theories; open to suggestions.
6	Describe in your opinion the <b>visions</b> that a leader should possess in order to be considered a successful leader?	-A vision of where the school should be heading in five to ten years with considerable evaluation	-A vision of where the school is going; curriculum; discipline; resources; recruiting best possible staff. -A vision to develop people interests in educational matters as well as life situations.	-A vision that has the welfare of people; a vision that promotes cooperation and growth in an harmonious way	-Prepare students to be open-minded; qualify them for society; help them advance and progress.
8	Assuming that you think that	-No. School board	-Yes	-Not really	- In curriculum because he/she

	you should participate in decision-making regarding the school, are there any circumstances or situations when the school leader should <b>not take your opinion</b> into account?	decisions are final after evaluation			is better qualified.
9	How can a leader <b>encourage/discourage</b> you to become <b>committed and collaborative</b> in taking part in decisions regarding school operations?	-When things are going astray and not into the day-to-day affairs.	-Give clear defined areas to make these decisions in; if I have an interest, allow me to develop it. -By participating into the whole process of running the school.	-By taking the pulse of all opinions that are voiced to him/her and follow up with the persons to have them involved in the process.	-Approachable; compassion; human; understandable
10	- Describe what <b>areas</b> of school life you would like to become involved in?	-Student affaires, academic affairs	- Environmental Projects; discipline; school physical appearance; health issues cafeteria. Running of library; canteen and excursions.	-Politics and school groups that want to change for a better school	-In art and recreation
11	What do you think are the possible <b>positive outcomes</b> of	-Another outlook towards the running of the school	- Make a difference in aspects that matter to me. -Learn to how	-Better school life; learning to conduct yourself.	-More things will be done; better relationship between staff

	your involvement?		to act and take initiatives in real life matters		and parents; school will have good reputation; this might reflect positively on my child's education; give me a sense of achievement.
12	What do you think are the possible <b>negative consequences</b> of your involvement?	-Getting too involved will upset the administration	-Too time consuming; may influence the efforts I want to make within my own field. -Time consuming; conflict with other members; face problems that I have no experience in	- May be involved to a point where there is no time to study; no more emotional return and possibly, burnout.	-Some teachers might not like that; will think I am interfering; will think I want to promote my child's learning.
13	Are there any <b>other comments</b> that you would like to add?	-Sometimes the board has to take drastic decisions if things don't go well	Too much involvement in school operations is a real drag and time consuming as one has to always participate in long meetings plus doing my job and extra activities involved	-Schools strive to satisfy many requirements, academic, social political and students should have a say and input in the running of their schools.	-Like to help to a certain extent; school leaders should be the ones who make the final decisions.



## APPENDIX 10

### Interview Questions to the Owner in School “B”

[To day is the (..) month, 2011, and I am about to interview the owner in a private school in Cyprus to find out what he thinks about stakeholders’ role in the school and the school leadership. The time now is (....)]

1. What does the term ‘school leadership’ means for you?
2. What do you think is the role of a school leader?
3. As the owner of the school, what are your priorities?
4. Who do you see as part of this leadership? And why?
5. Why do you think schools need this type of leadership now?
6. Do you think that schools need to involve the other stakeholders in school matters? And why?
7. How do you see the role of the other stakeholders including the deputy head, teachers, parents and students?
8. How is your relationship with the deputy head?
9. Who do you think should make the decisions including the final decisions? And why?
10. Can you explain how do you think this type of leadership can really work in schools?
11. What do you think you need to do, as the school’s leader, in order to apply this type of leadership?
12. What forms/shapes this leadership can take? For example, do you tell the deputy head to do certain duties?
13. What are the aspects and conditions that you see are needed in order to make this type of leadership work in school? And to make the other stakeholders share leadership
14. Are there any effects/consequences of this type of leadership on school? If yes, what are they?
15. Are there any effects on students learning? If yes, what are they?
16. In your opinion, what can stand in the way of applying this type of leadership?
17. What problems/issues you may face when you allow the other stakeholders to share leadership?
18. Is there anything negative from applying this type of leadership? If yes, what?
19. What do you need to do as the owner to address them? How do you handle them?
20. Are there any other comments that you would like to add regarding this topic?

Thank you. The time now is (...)

### **Interview Questions to the Deputy Head in School “B”**

[To day is the (..) April, 2010, and I am about to interview the deputy head in a private school in Cyprus to find out what she thinks about stakeholders' role in the school and the school's leadership The time now is (...)]

1. What does the term: 'school leadership' means for you?
2. How do you see your role in school as the deputy head?
3. What are your priorities and concerns?
4. Who do you think is part of this leadership? And why?
5. Who is responsible for making decisions including the final decisions? And why?
6. Do you think schools need this type of leadership now? And why?
7. What forms/shapes this leadership can take?
8. How does it really work to share school leadership with the other stakeholders? What needs to be done? What does it require?
9. As the deputy head, what do you think you need to do? What are your responsibilities here?
10. What are the possible effects/consequences of sharing of leadership with the other stakeholders? the owner, teachers, parents, and students?
11. What do you think are the possible issues that you could face you as the deputy head when you try to include /involve the other stakeholders in school matters and make them part of school leadership?
- 12.** How do you handle and manage such issues? What do you do and how?
- 13.** How can you as the deputy head encourage stakeholders to share leadership with you?
14. Are there any other comments that you would like to add regarding this topic?

Thank you. The time now is (...)

## **Interview Questions to Teachers in School “B”**

[Interview No. (...)]

To day is the (.. ) of month, 2010, and I am about to interview an elementary school teacher in a private school in Cyprus to find out what she/he thinks about stakeholders' role in the school and the school's leadership. The time now is (...)]

1. What does school leadership means for you? What does it imply?
2. Do you see leadership to relate to one person or more?
3. in you opinion, what are the leadership functions?
4. Who do you see as part of this leadership? Who is involved in this leadership?  
And Why?
5. How do you see your role in it? And why?
6. What are the areas that you think that you should be involved in and why?
7. Who makes the decisions including final decisions? And why?
8. How does this type of leadership work?
9. How do you think you can share the leadership of the school?
10. Who is responsible for applying shared leadership? And why?
11. Why do you think schools need this type of leadership?
12. What the deputy head needs to do in order to share leadership with you?
13. What things you can do as a teacher to share leadership of the school?
14. What forms/shapes this leadership can take? Why and how?
15. Do you think that this type of sharing can work in schools? And why?
16. Why do you think that schools need many leaders?
17. Why do you think that applying this type of leadership is good for schools?
18. Do you accept to be held accountable for your decisions and actions? And why?
19. Do you think the deputy head should trust you to make the right decisions? And why?
20. Do you think parents should be part of this leadership? Why?
21. Do you think that students should be part of this leadership? Why?
22. What are the effects of this leadership on students and schools?
23. What the head can do if the teachers don't want to share leadership?
24. Are there any other comments that you would like to add regarding this topic?

Thank you. The time now is (...)

### **Interview Questions to Parents in School “B”**

[Interview No. (...)]

To day is the (.. ) of month, 2010, and I am about to interview a parents of a child in the school to find out what she thinks about stakeholders’ role in the school and the school’s leadership. The time now is (...)]

1. As a parent, how do you see the leadership of the school? What does it mean for you?
2. Who do you think is part of the school leadership? And why?
3. How do you think, as a parent, you can become part of this leadership?
4. What are the shapes or forms that this leadership can take? For example, do you think that the school needs to ask you to do certain things in the school?
5. Do you think that schools need this type of leadership? And why?
6. How do you see your role as a parent in school? And why?
7. What aspects, as a parent, you can do in school? And why?
8. Are you ready to devote the time and the effort needed in order to be actively involved in school and part of school leadership? And why?
9. Who do you think should make the decisions including the final ones? And why?
10. How does this leadership work in reality, to be part of school leadership?
11. What schools aspects that you think you can share or you can do together with school leadership?
12. What needs to be done in order to apply this type of leadership? How do you think this type of leadership can be achieved/obtained in a school?
13. What the owner or deputy head needs to do in order to encourage you a parent to be part of this leadership?
14. Are there any outcomes or effects from parents sharing school leadership? If yes, what are they and why?
15. What are the possible issues that can stop the deputy head from involving you in school leadership?
16. Are there any other comments that you would like to add regarding this topic?

Thank you (time)